

# **Public Personnel Review**

**October, 1954**

**Vol. 15**

**No. 4**

- Service Ratings Won't Serve Two Masters
- Judicial Review of the Group Oral Interview
- Lost: One Junior Management Assistant
- Michigan's Test Record System
- Public Administration: A Personal Approach
- How To Be Interviewed
- Staffs and Budgets of Public Personnel Agencies
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**Quarterly Journal of the Civil Service Assembly**

# PUBLIC PERSONNEL REVIEW

The Quarterly Journal of the Civil Service Assembly  
of the United States and Canada

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### Public Personnel Review . . . . .

The quarterly journal of Civil Service Assembly of the United States and Canada provides a medium for the publication of factual material, and for materials that may represent divergent ideas, judgments, and opinions. The views expressed in articles and other contributions are those of the authors, and may not be construed as reflecting the views of the Assembly or the editors unless so stated.

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## SUPERVISING THE EMPLOYEE'S HEALTH; LIKE SERVICING THE FINEST MACHINE

Just as a machine is subject to the supervision of the maintenance crew, after it is put in operation, just so an employee, once he has started to work, comes under your supervision for health maintenance.

It is taken for granted that a man whose duty it is to maintain or repair a machine knows what he is doing. In other words, he must have adequate training. . . .

A mechanic who tries to repair a machine with the wrong tools will not only fail to repair it, but may break it further. . . . Using wrong tools may also fail miserably in health counseling. Wrong tools are: indifference, disgust, impatience, annoyance, anger, criticism, betraying confidences, misuse of force and so on.

No one expects anything from a machine which is not in keeping with its specifications. If we operate or make demands on a machine, which are not in keeping with its specifications, something is sure to go wrong. An industrialist sometimes makes demands on his employees which are beyond their capacity, usually because he has not taken the pains to find out an employee's capacity, or limitations.

When a machine fails to meet the demands made upon it, the foreman does not say the machine is vicious or insubordinate or lazy or disloyal. He does not fire the machine nor discipline it. He orders it taken apart to see why it doesn't work properly. The machine is repaired by the maintenance crew and put back into working order as soon as possible.

Why don't we treat men who break down in much the same way? . . .

We know, but we forget, that men, just like machines, often have no control over the things that happen to them, which prevent them from being as good men on the job as we would like them to be, and as good men on the job as they themselves would like to be and could be.

No, our human nature is peculiar in that we reason fairly reasonably about things—tools, equipment and materials—but do not reason so reasonably about people.—W. E. Park, "Master Mechanics in Human Maintenance," *ADVANCED MANAGEMENT*, December, 1952, pp. 16-17.



# Service Ratings Won't Serve Two Masters

E. W. Chopson

## Why Management Wants Ratings

EVER since men began to hire other men to work for them, the problem of deciding how much each worker should be paid has existed. As soon as groups of men were hired and foremen or supervisors were needed, the added problem of who should be promoted to foreman developed. When work forces were to be reduced, the problem of selecting those to be laid off arose. There was, too, the question of how to handle disciplinary cases.

At first, these decisions were made purely on the personal opinion of the owner. As organizations grew, the decision was delegated to subordinates, but top management has always sought assurance that such decisions were well made. Various techniques have been used to provide a basis for making decisions—interviews with those to be considered, selection by boards or committees, occasionally even votes by workers. Seniority has always been an important factor, and this plus an interview has been by far the commonest device. All these methods failed in many instances and, in addition, often created resentment among those not favored.

With the advent of the present century bringing its emphasis on scientific management and psychological measurement, it was natural that management should turn to these techniques as panaceas for one of its most persistent problems.

Objective tests in the form of promotional examinations proved to have some validity in selecting for advancement and now are an important phase of the selective process in many private organizations and public jurisdictions. Such tests, their virtues and weaknesses, are outside the scope of this report. Probably few people who have seen them properly used would be willing to abandon them, but by them-

selves they are far from a perfect selection device.

The other innovation resulting from the scientific approach was the so-called efficiency rating, now more commonly called a performance report. The reasoning behind these devices was that since all supervisors evaluated their workers in one way or another, it was only necessary to reduce these evaluations to precise objective measurements and they could then be used either as the sole criteria for promotion, or that together with a promotional examination they would certainly solve the problem. It was also assumed that the least efficient worker should be the one to suffer when a layoff or demotion became necessary and that such ratings would show who was least efficient. Literally hundreds of scales of various types have been developed.

## Can "Administrative" Ratings Guide Decisions?

No rating system offered so far has been even fairly satisfactory, and there is considerable doubt that one ever will be really successful. The authors or promoters of various service ratings will explain at length the scientific research which lies behind the design of their particular systems and the steps which have been taken to make them accurate, objective, and valid. In most cases, they are carefully prepared, and many of them approach the maximum efficiency possible with such devices. They all fail, however, in that they attempt to base precise objective findings on subjective opinions—data which are not capable of producing such findings. A rating made by a supervisor, no matter what its purpose or the method or devices used to produce it, can never be any more accurate than the opinions held by that supervisor. Just as workers vary in every conceivable manner, so do supervisors vary, and their opinions reflect those variations.

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### In Production Jobs They Help

When, as in some production jobs, success may be based almost entirely on the number of units produced and the percentage of those units which pass inspection, a rating based on production may be adequate to determine pay. Piecework rates are, in fact, a reflection of this view. However, unless the next job up the promotional ladder is also a production job of very similar nature, the production rating is likely to have almost no significance as an indicator of promotional potentiality. If, as is very often the case, the journeyman production worker is to be promoted to foreman, where his primary duties will be teaching, supervision, maintenance of quantity and quality in his unit, and promotion of worker morale, the introverted tendencies which may make for high production as a worker may point to failure as a foreman.

### Public Jobs Can Seldom Be Measured

In the public service, we have few truly production jobs. Usually our work calls for a much wider range of activities and places much greater weight upon work habits and interpersonal relationships. Such jobs do not lend themselves to objective measurement; they must be evaluated by judgments and subjective opinions formed from observation of day-to-day activities and critical incidents.

Most public agencies have dozens, if not hundreds, of employees in each one of their more common classes. Usually though, one supervisor will direct, at most, ten or twelve. Thus, if all employees of the class are to be treated alike in terms of pay and promotion, all their supervisors must rate alike.

### Why Supervisors Don't Rate Alike

But supervisors don't rate alike, and try as he may to describe and define the terms in his scale and to reduce the different supervisors' ratings to comparable objective scores, the rating scale-builder is likely to fail. Let us take such a simple matter as tardiness. One item in a graphic rating scale may say "frequently tardy." What does that mean? To one supervisor it may

mean once in six months. To another, anything less than twice a week is not frequent. Our scale-builder corrects that by saying "once a month" instead of "frequently." Now one supervisor says that anyone who is not sitting at his desk with his pencil poised to begin work at the stroke of the hour is tardy. Another says that if the employee is in the building he is on time. If we define, in terms of minutes and seconds, how tardy is tardy, then what about the individual who is at his desk on the dot, but who spends the first half hour in collecting his thoughts to get under way, or the one who leaves his desk five minutes after the hour to go to the cafeteria for a delayed breakfast? Even if we define all those terms or add items to describe these offenses as other than tardiness, we still face the fact that some supervisors can't or won't observe those things; some won't remember them when rating time comes; and still others, while remembering them, won't report them on the rating.

There are numberless reasons for these variations. Some supervisors argue that tardiness is unimportant if the worker still turns in a good day's work. Others are often tardy themselves and, while they recognize it as a fault, they do not feel they can penalize others for faults they also have. Still others try to curry favor with their workers by being generous good fellows. Some are just so insecure in their own positions, or in their personal lives, that they cannot face an unpleasant task, or bear the idea of causing pain to the worker. Others think the "see no evil" approach gets better long-term results and simply evade the system. We may even suspect that some identify with their workers and see management as an unjust oppressive force to be circumvented whenever possible. These are likely to rate the workers who are worst (from management's viewpoint) as the best. We must admit, too, that there are a few misfit supervisors who simply play favorites and give good reports to those they like and poor ones to others whom they dislike.

Many supervisors believe that any severe criticism of a worker will destroy their working relationships and make the worker even less effective. They argue that unless a worker is bad enough to dismiss,

it is wiser to comment only on his good points and hope for time and experience to cure his faults. Unfortunately, it is true that there is danger that criticism not properly given will do more harm than good, and until we can train all supervisors to a far higher level of skill than many now possess, this fear among less skillful supervisors may be justified.

When the rating is to be used as a factor in promotion, still another question arises. Do the traits which make for success on the present job, and which are presumably reflected by this rating, apply with equal weight to the higher job? As pointed out above, they often do not. If the rater is asked to give an actual rating on promotional potential, then does the rater know what the higher job requires?

#### Ratings Lack Validity

One of the facts which the advocates of reports of performance as factors in administrative decisions don't like to face is that ratings lack validity. They admit it, however, by implication, whenever their system provides reviewing officers, appeal procedures, or similar safeguards to the worker who feels aggrieved. Such procedures may reduce the worst injustices to those improperly rated down, but they do nothing to correct the more common offense of rating too leniently. No one ever appeals if he is rated too high, and a reviewing officer is seldom in a position to tell the supervisor that a worker is less valuable than the supervisor says he is. Admittedly, the supervisor who gives a low rating to an employee faces an unpleasant task if he is required to discuss that rating in a personal interview with the employee. Often it means practically telling the employee, "I'm keeping you from getting a salary increase or a promotion." Many supervisors simply can't face that task. Hence, they give ratings above those deserved.

In an attempt to correct this, many systems do not provide for discussion of ratings between rater and rated, and often the rating consists merely of a check list or graphic scale on which the rater checks his opinion of performance without giving any numerical score. Scoring is then done cen-

trally and, presumably, the rater doesn't know what his rating will mean in terms of score until it is all over. In actual fact, these plans seldom improve the situation. Often they even make it worse because the rater reasons that the employee knows who rated him and will resent a low rating. Since the rater doesn't know just what score his markings will produce, he rates even higher to be safe.

All of these points merely tend to show that desirable as it would be for management to have objective evidence on which to base salary adjustments, promotions, layoffs, and disciplinary actions, the performance report cannot fill the bill and any great dependence on it is likely to lead to trouble.

#### Another Approach: Ratings As Supervisory Tools

Recently, the conviction has become widespread that even though performance reports are poor tools for use in determining administrative actions, they do have value as supervisory and training devices. Unquestionably, workers want to know what their supervisors and fellow workers think of them. Many studies have shown that status, recognition, and a sense of belonging to the group are more important than salary in determining worker satisfaction. Workers want to be liked and they want to advance. To reach their goals, they must know and overcome their weaknesses. Naturally, they hope for assistance from their supervisors. Many supervisors, however, hesitate to offer this help because they don't know the need for it; because they are not sure it is their responsibility; because they are not sure the individual worker will welcome it; or because they fear that any frank expressions will be interpreted as a prelude to administrative penalties; or just because they don't feel competent to give such help.

#### What Can "Supervisory" Ratings Accomplish?

The establishment of a regular rating plan intended to cover these subjects, and free from pay or promotional implications, puts both supervisors and workers on notice that such help is a part of the super-

visory process. Workers have the right to expect it, and supervisors the obligation to provide it. Such a plan can remind both the supervisor and the worker of the various traits, characteristics, knowledges, skills, attitudes and habits which influence success or failure on the job. It can furnish an orderly structured pattern for a joint review of these factors. It can assist the supervisor in pointing out to his workers the more intimate personal traits which may hamper their success, thus easing difficult discussions. Lastly, it can give the worker an opportunity to express his opinions and feelings about his job, and even about his supervisor.

It can broaden the concept of the supervisor's job from merely that of the pusher trying to increase production to that of a combined guide, teacher, and counsellor. Everyone must have someone in whom to confide his problems and his triumphs. Often that confidant is the worker's wife or someone in his family. Often, he has no one in whom he can confide and must seek such release in casual acquaintances. There are thousands of stories about bartenders serving this purpose. Management would like that relief, or at least that part of it which cannot be secured in the worker's home, to be given by someone in the office or plant. The ventilation of personal problems and release of the tensions they cause is of vital importance to keeping the worker productive and satisfied. The supervisor is the natural person to whom the worker should look in the work situation for such an outlet. If the worker views his supervisor as a tool of management interested only in driving him for more production, and with judicial power to control his future, the worker cannot bring himself to confess problems, fears, and illnesses which interfere with his work. To confess your crimes before the judge is to insure conviction.

Management must, therefore, decide what role its supervisors are to fulfill in the organization, and if it is to use performance reports at all, must decide on their place in the supervisor-worker relationship. Ideally, the supervisor should serve both as the management representative responsible for efficient production and as

the friend and teacher of his workers. This role is difficult and calls for people of sound judgment and emotional maturity. They must also have skill in the trade they are to supervise. Such people are rare at best, and all require constant training and support if they are to carry their dual load.

### Why "Dual" Purpose Ratings Fail

Since performance reports do have some validity for administrative purposes and since they can furnish a setting for worker-supervisor discussions of strengths and weaknesses, there is an almost irresistible temptation to use them for both purposes. There can be little doubt, however, that any such attempt is doomed to failure. Let us examine the requirements of systems intended for each of the two purposes and then compare them.

The report intended to support administrative decisions must be as objective and as accurate as possible and must be fair and free from bias or willful inaccuracy. It should be confidential and not shown to the person rated, if frankness is expected in the ratings. A review procedure must be provided and the scores must finally be reduced to some numerical value which will permit the weighing of one employee against another. This plainly puts the rater in the role of judge and the ratee in that of defendant or petitioner.

A rating to be used as a supervisory and training device must place the rater and ratee in an entirely different relationship. It must make them sit down together for a frank and thorough discussion of the worker as a complete person; then as a team, plan a program of development for the worker. Complete confidence must exist. The worker must feel free to talk out all his doubts, fears and problems. He must know that no possible reprisals or other adverse effect upon his income or status will result from his frankness. He must have confidence that any criticism by the rater is made with the objective of helping him, not to justify some penalty which is about to be imposed. If there is a reviewing officer from higher management, or if the rating is retained in a central file, there can never be assurance that it will not be used

for administrative purposes. Thus, a rating which is to aid the supervisory process must never be disclosed to a third person. All the scoring safeguards which may prove to have value in "administrative" oriented ratings are handicaps to the "supervisory" rating. It is necessary that both individuals know exactly what the rating means to say. Any formula scoring merely defeats that end. Neither is objectivity necessary or even desirable in the rating used in supervision. The worker wants to know, and should know, exactly what his supervisor thinks of him on all counts, even including mere impressions. It is not necessary that such opinions be reduced to quantitative terms. In fact, many of the most important factors in determining how the worker gets along cannot be reduced to such terms and are simply lost or altered beyond recognition in the attempt.

Possibly, it would be better if "supervisory" ratings were never reduced to writing at all, but were merely a structured interview covering certain predetermined subjects. There would seem, however, to be little harm in a written rating, and the employee may benefit from being given a copy to study later. Some such ratings are in narrative form and some agencies report excellent results from them. Others are graphic scales or check lists, often with space for additional remarks. Their exact form is not important. The really vital part of the rating is the free discussion between worker and supervisor which accompanies it.

The question may be raised as to how management can be sure that a rating has been made, if it is not sent on for review. This, however, should not be too much of a problem. A certification that such a rating has been prepared can be signed by both rater and ratee and sent forward, or

various other means can be used. The important thing is that the content of the rating be kept confidential.

#### What Management Must Decide

This brief discussion of an extremely complex subject does not purport to give advice on whether or not to use ratings; neither does it try to advocate what type rating should be chosen if one is to be used. Its only purpose is to point out some of the limitations of such ratings and some of the problems inherent in their use.

Each administrator, unless bound by laws or rules, must decide for himself whether ratings are to be used at all. It is only hoped that these thoughts may lead him to ask himself certain questions, namely:

1. Whom do I wish rated?
2. What uses are to be made of the ratings?
3. Are all these proposed uses compatible?
4. If not, which ones are most important?
5. What type of system will best serve these purposes?
6. Are the results of such a rating likely to be worth their costs?

After all these questions have been answered, if it is decided that a rating system should be adopted, there are many sources from which information as to particular forms and techniques suited to various purposes can be secured.

Do not, however, decide you want a rating system and then immediately design or buy such a system, trusting to luck or time to disclose uses for it later. You almost certainly will find that a system so chosen fails to meet your needs. Quite probably, it will be rather expensive and it may prove, in spite of the time and money spent on it, to be worse than no ratings at all.



# Judicial Review of the Group Oral Interview

Harry Seligson

THE Group Oral Interview or Group Performance Test has taken firm root in the armament of tests of civil service examiners, especially in those instances where written tests fail to assess adequately the personality traits of candidates.<sup>1</sup> Although the group oral is a relatively recent technique, its pros and cons have been debated at great length.<sup>2</sup> The discussion, however, has revolved largely around the group oral as a technique, its validity, etc. Relatively little has been written about its reception by the courts. This article re-

views the current legal status of the interview and makes some suggested changes in judicial thinking with respect to it.<sup>3</sup>

## Description of the Group Oral Interview

Briefly, the Group Oral calls for a group of candidates—generally from six to eight in number—to be seated around a table and to discuss for about an hour or an hour and one-half a controversial problem presented to them. Raters sit around the room, as unobtrusively as possible, and observe the candidates. At the end of the period, the raters record their judgments on individual traits such as appearance, voice and language, manner and poise, comprehension and presentation of ideas, diplomacy, adaptability, maturity of judgment, and emotional stability.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, each rater records an over-all estimate of each candidate. The Group Oral Performance Test is generally limited to jobs in which personality traits, especially leadership qualities, are important. Although a good deal of experimentation is currently going on to develop written tests sufficiently valid and reliable to evaluate the candidate's personality, not much headway has been made to date. Accordingly, civil service commissions have relied, in part, on the oral interview for the assessment of these personality factors.

In private industry, the group oral interview has been used to some extent, especially in promotional examinations. Absent some limiting special agreement with a union, an employer in private industry can interview in any fashion he desires

<sup>1</sup> In 1952, a survey indicated that at least 44 jurisdictions were using the group oral interview. See Harold Fields, "An Analysis of the Use of the Group Oral Interview," *Personnel*, 27 (No. 6, 1951), 480-86. Included in this group were: N. Y. City Department of Health, and other New York agencies; Washington State Personnel Board; Colorado Civil Service Commission; Denver Civil Service Commission; Contra Costa County Civil Service Commission; Seattle Department of Civil Service; Kalamazoo Civil Service Commission; Pontiac Civil Service Commission; U.S. Army; U.S. Navy.

<sup>2</sup> See this extensive literature: Milton M. Mandell, "The Group Oral Performance Test," *Public Personnel Review*, October, 1946, 209-12; William Brody and Norman J. Powell, "A New Approach to Oral Testing," *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, Summer, 1947, 289-98; Bernard M. Bass, "The Leaderless Group Discussion Technique," *Personnel Psychology*, Summer, 1950, 179-85; Harold Fields, "The Group Interview Test: Its Strength," *Public Personnel Review*, July, 1950, 139-46; Charles A. Meyer, "The Group Interview Test: Its Weakness," *Public Personnel Review*, July, 1950, 147-54; Roberta Scott, *The Group Oral Test in Selecting Public Employees* (Chicago: Civil Service Assembly, 1950); John C. Flanagan, Dorothy Adkins, and Dorothy H. P. Caldwell, *Major Developments in Examining Methods* (Chicago: Civil Service Assembly, 1950); H. L. Ansbacher, "The History of the Leaderless Group Discussion Technique," *Psychological Bulletin*, September, 1951, 383-91; Milton M. Mandell, "The Group Oral Performance Test," *Personnel Administration*, November, 1952, 1-10, and January, 1953, 11-17; Anthony Zill, "A Further Inquiry into the Group Oral," *Public Personnel Review*, April, 1953, 55-63; Albert P. Maslow, *Oral Tests: A Survey of Current Practice* (Chicago: Civil Service Assembly, 1951).

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<sup>3</sup> The most recent comprehensive discussion of the individual interview appeared as one chapter in *Oral Tests in Public Personnel Selection* (Chicago: Civil Service Assembly, 1943), pp. 141-153. H. Eliot Kaplan has analyzed Court decisions in issues of the *Public Personnel Review* (April, 1940-January, 1950) and in the *Civil Service Law Reporter* published by the National Civil Service League (July, 1951 to date).

<sup>4</sup> These are taken from the procedures of the Denver Civil Service Commission.

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and not expect his decision to be challenged. Consequently, no legal question would arise from the use of the interview in private industry. But civil service commissions are established by law, and although courts will grant them a certain measure of flexibility and discretion, they do expect commissions to observe the standards required by law.<sup>5</sup>

Until 1954, at least within the knowledge of this writer, not a single case involving the group oral had gone up to a supreme court of any state. All the pronouncements of courts on interviews had stemmed from cases involving the *individual* oral interview. Although it is the group oral interview which is the principal concern of this article, much of the review of legal decisions will necessarily have to be based on cases which involved the individual interview. Similar legal principles prevail in both individual and group oral interviews.

### Statutory Powers and Limitations of Civil Service Commissions

Civil service commissions are bound by constitutional or statutory provisions. These vary somewhat in different jurisdictions, but in general they all impose fairly similar requirements. Typical are the following provisions of the Charter of the City and County of Denver (1927) with reference to civil service:

#### Section 225: What Rules shall provide.

The rules shall provide for . . . open and competitive examinations as to fitness . . . promotion on basis of merit, experience and record.

#### Section 228: Examinations, Subject, Notice.

All examinations shall be impartial and relate only to matters which will test the fitness of the persons examined.

#### Section 233: Promotions.

All examinations for promotion shall be competitive among such members of each department as desire to submit themselves to examination.

<sup>5</sup> In commenting on the reviewability of actions by Civil Service Commissions, the Supreme Court of the State of Washington said: "Where Courts do interfere it is upon the theory that the action is so capricious and arbitrary as to evidence a total failure to exercise discretion and is, therefore, not a valid act." *State ex rel. Farmer v. Austin*, 186 Washington 577 (1936), 59 P. (2d) 379.

In determining whether the actions of a civil service commission or of the examiners appointed by the commission are arbitrary or capricious or whether there has been formal and substantial compliance with constitutional or statutory provisions, the courts have established certain criteria:

Is the test process "competitive"? Is the test "objective"? Is it "practical" in character? Does it relate to those matters which will test fairly the relative capacity and fitness of the persons examined?

As long as courts had to consider only the written type of objective examination (multiple-choice, completion, true and false) they had little difficulty in ruling that such examinations met the standards of competitiveness, objectivity, and practicality. Such examinations called for only one correct answer, no matter who was grading them. In the main, also, these written tests had face validity and satisfied the candidates that their fitness for specific jobs was being adequately plumbed.

But when, in addition to written examinations, civil service commissions turned to oral interviews, either individual or group, to evaluate traits of personality, in the grading of which raters might differ, the courts needed to take a new look at the question of competitiveness and objectivity.

### Judicial Review of the Interview

The landmark case on the interview was *Fink v. Finnegan*.<sup>6</sup> The applicant was being examined for the position of medical examiner. A panel of examiners interviewed him asking him questions of a technical nature which he answered correctly. However, he was failed on the interview part of the test because, in the opinion of the oral examination panel, he lacked force and executive ability and was altogether too mild. Upon appeal to the Court of Appeals, the panel decision was invalidated on the ground that the oral examination did not meet the standards laid down by the provisions of the Constitution of the State of New York. The following extracts of the Court's opinion are pertinent:

<sup>6</sup> 270 NY 356 (1936), 1 NE (2d) 462.

A test or examination, to be competitive, must employ an objective standard or measure. Where the standard or measure is wholly subjective to the examiners, it differs in effect in no respect from an uncontrolled opinion of the examiners and cannot be termed competitive.

An examination cannot be classed as competitive unless it conforms to measures or standards which are sufficiently objective to be capable of being challenged and reviewed, when necessary, by other examiners of equal ability and experience. . . . In this case there was no finding that executive ability and force are qualities that are necessary for the position, nor did the announcement of the examination reveal that these qualities would be tested. . . . There has been no finding that these qualities cannot be measured objectively.

This quotation has been the source of considerable difficulty to civil service commissions, particularly that portion setting forth the criterion of reviewability by "other examiners of equal ability and experience." It seemed to proscribe the use of oral interviews as part of the examination process unless a clear showing was made that other, more objective measures, were unavailable. Yet the New York court did not wholly condemn these oral tests; it merely said they must be devised so as to pass the criterion of competitiveness, as defined by the court.

In a larger sense, much of the court's reasoning was *dicta*, not particularly germane to the case. The decision could very well have gone off on a determination that the oral examination was defective on two grounds: (1) the examination notice was barren of any indication that personality would be examined, and (2) the examiners apparently were not provided with any guidance or standards for judging the traits. In other words, this was not a case which really met head on the question of the validity of properly established oral examinations. At the same time, the language of the court cast some doubts (needlessly so in the opinion of this writer) on the objectivity and competitiveness of oral examinations. This was an unfortunate development, for other courts have subsequently taken the language of the *Fink* case literally, without relating it to the specific set of circumstances out of which it grew.

*Florence M. Sloat v. Board of Examiners of Board of Education of City of New York*,<sup>7</sup> decided a year later, clarified some of the cloudiness raised by the *Fink* case. The *Sloat* case involved a promotion, the application of a substitute teacher for appointment to a permanent teaching post. New York provides that promotions and appointments be made according to merit and fitness, to be ascertained as far as practicable by competitive examinations. Part of the examination process in the *Sloat* case consisted of an oral interview, information on which had been properly detailed in the notice of examination, which indicated the personality traits that would be assessed by the interviewers. The examiners had also been thoroughly briefed on the standards to follow. This case was not, then, subject to the procedural defects of the *Fink* case, and consequently squarely met the issue of validity of oral examinations. Upon rejection by the examination board, candidate Sloat challenged the oral examination as failing to meet the required statutory standards of practicability and competitiveness, citing the *Fink* case in support. In upholding the Board of Examiners, the court had occasion to review the *Fink* case and place it in its proper setting. First, the court held that the *Fink* case had not condemned all oral examinations: it had merely tried to establish standards for valid oral examinations. In fact, said the court, the appraisal of certain personal qualities is often a necessary function of examiners. However,

It would be impossible to formulate a standard by which such qualities may be defined or measured with entire objectivity. . . . Evidently it is not practicable to apply such tests in exactly the same form to each competitor or to make exact comparisons between them.

Furthermore,

Exact definition of the qualities which are essential or desirable may be impossible; an exact formula or standard by which such qualities may be measured has never been achieved; mechanical application of any standard is certainly not practicable. *Much must be left here to the judgment of the examiners. The test cannot be wholly objective and to the extent that*

<sup>7</sup> 274 NY 367 (1937), annotated in 112 ALR 665-6.



*it is subjective the results may depend as much upon the fitness of the examiners as upon the fitness of the candidate. That is a risk inherent in all systems of examinations. (italics added)*

In the face of such conditions,

It must appear that examiners acted arbitrarily and without application of measures or standards which are sufficiently objective to be capable of being challenged and reviewed when necessary by other examiners of equal ability and experience.

For the first time a major state court sensed the proper scope of oral examinations, removing them from the traditional rigid framework of "objectivity" in which the *Fink* decision had encased them. It recognized the difficulty of establishing precise mechanical standards in judging personality and the latitude which must be given to examiners in such instances. But at the same time it reaffirmed the necessity for examiners to act within the framework of certain measures or standards that can be reviewed by others. Of course, it is the latter aspect which has created the most difficulty in recent years. The examiner grades the candidate on each trait and also on an over-all basis and may record some comments by which he explains his rating. How can this rating be reviewed "by other examiners of equal ability?" It is submitted that while the *Sloat* case was very properly concerned about this objective, its pronouncement was of too general a nature to furnish civil service commissions with guidance. It must be admitted, however, that this is a perfectly sound legal method of proceeding: building up principles by a series of decisions on matters as they come before the courts. In effect, it leaves it to the court to review the examination and decide whether the panel has acted in such a manner that another board of examiners, of equal fitness and competency, would have arrived at substantially the same conclusion.

In *Bridgman v. Kern*<sup>8</sup> a lower New York court invalidated the judgment of a board of examiners that had interviewed candidates individually for the position of ex-

aminer. The interviewers varied widely in their judgment on individual traits, and they failed all but one of the 25 candidates. There was some evidence that the examiners had delved into the political ideologies of the candidates, a practice proscribed by the New York State Constitution. In view of the slanted views displayed by the examiners towards the candidates, and the decided efforts of the examiners to approve someone with certain ideological leanings, the decision for reversal seems sound. Such evidence provides a court with grounds for reviewing the objectivity and impartiality of the examiners, and permits reversal for arbitrary and capricious conduct.

In 1949, the Supreme Court of California reviewed the whole question of individual oral interviews.<sup>9</sup> This case involved, in part, an oral interview in which the interviewers were to judge physical characteristics, intellectual factors, and emotional factors (poise, social adaptability) of the candidates for promotion. A rejected candidate challenged the objectivity of the oral examination. In upholding the commission the court said:

To be sure there must be measurable standards established for determining the general proficiency of the candidates for the particular position, but the fact that such standards were subjective rather than objective does not prevent the classification of the "oral interview" as a "competitive" examination. The various aspects of the personality factors as previously determined by the Commission to be necessary and important to the position to be filled, were itemized for consideration by the examiner as the measuring rod and guidepost in his evaluation process as to the personal fitness of the candidate so that it cannot be said that there was no effective common criteria of base topics underlying the comparative ratings.

In the *Almasy* case, the California Court went perhaps a trifle farther than the New York Court in the *Sloat* case in pointing out, by inference at least, that the old shib-

<sup>9</sup> *Almasy v. Los Angeles County Civil Service Commission*, 134 Cal. (2d) 387 (1949), 210 P. (2d) 503. For a discussion of this case see H. Eliot Kaplan, "Judicial Review of Objectivity of Oral Examinations," *Public Personnel Review*, January, 1950, 32-37; and "Objectivity in Civil Service Examinations," *Yale Law Journal*, June, 1949, 1179-86.

<sup>8</sup> 257 App. Div. 420 (1939), 13 NYS (2d) 249.

booth of objectivity must be viewed in the light of modern-day developments in selection techniques; that assessment of personality traits on a "subjective" basis does not prevent the oral examination from satisfying the rule of competitiveness; and that a sufficient measuring rod and guidepost is furnished the examiners by itemizing and defining certain factors for them which they should keep in mind in arriving at an over-all judgment of the candidate. Like the court in the *Sloat* case, the California court believed that "manifestly a candidate's personality and attitudes cannot be measured through the mechanical application of fixed standards in the course of an interview." However, the court also goes on to emphasize the manoeuvrability and flexibility retained by the examiners:

... the pattern thereof (that is, the oral examination) must develop in part according to the individual being tested and the precise line of procedure will reflect the skill of the examiner in achieving an appropriate appraisal, including the final evaluation factor as a composite picture reflecting the end result of delicate weighing and balancing of the separate judgments on the personality factors.

That is to say, that given the individual personality factors as a framework of reference the final over-all rating will necessarily depend not on a mathematical addition of the rating on the individual traits but on the skill with which the examiner is able to weigh and balance his separate judgments on the personality factors. The crux of the matter then is: How is such a judgment to be reviewed by other examiners of equal competence, the standard established by the *Sloat* case? In the *Almassy* case the court said:

Although the evaluation record did not detail the mental processes by which the examiners . . . arrived at their respective ratings, enough detail was presented for adequate review consistent with the practicalities of inquiry into personality factors.

If this statement is to mean anything, it means that the examiner need present only enough detail to indicate that he has weighed the potentialities of the candi-

dates in arriving at his over-all judgment.

What is of interest in this case is the complete acceptance of the oral interview as valid examination procedure meeting the test of competitiveness, and the recognition of the fact that examiners may have to rely on their subjective judgments in evaluating candidates, being required to demonstrate only that they have exercised reasonable judgment. This would seem to preclude any search-in-depth into the mental processes of the examiners and may boil itself down to this: Absent any obvious or capricious action on the part of the examiners (as in the *Bridgman* case) it will be assumed that the commission has selected a competent group of examiners upon whose collective judgment reliance will be placed, even though it is not possible to follow in minute detail their mental processes in arriving at their ratings. Granting this to be the interpretation which may be placed on the *Almassy* case, it is a considerable step forward from the *Fink* case.<sup>10</sup>

Nevertheless *Fink v. Finnegan* seems to exert some influence even in 1954. It did so in a case decided in the District Court of the City and County of Denver.<sup>11</sup> On a promotional examination for Deputy Fire Chief, in which an individual and group oral interview represented the sole test, one Frazzini came out second in a jurisdiction in which the "rule of one" prevails. He challenged the results on the grounds

<sup>10</sup> See also *Gollin v. Wilson*, 102 NYS (2d) 1951 involving a competitive promotional examination for a housing manager. The individual oral test rated factors of speech, manner, and judgment. Said the Court: "A court is not the agency to conduct, supervise or review civil service examinations. It may intervene only when the action of the Civil Service Commission is arbitrary, capricious, or unreasonable." And *Burke v. Fields*, 108 NYS (2d) 313 (1951): "In so far as possible, merit and fitness should be judged by objective standards but determination of fitness for some positions, particularly those which require executive and intellectual ability and broad cultural learning, cannot always be based on objectivity solely. In such cases the examinations may be subjective in so far as objectivity is impracticable or impossible, and to the extent that they are subjective the risk that the examiners themselves are fit to examine must be accepted."

<sup>11</sup> *Cassio Frazzini v. Civil Service Commission of the City and County of Denver, et al.*, decided March 1954, (unreported) and now being appealed by the Civil Service Commission to the Supreme Court of Colorado.

that the examination consisted entirely of oral statements and no means was furnished or employed for objective grading; that the examination was entirely subjective in nature and contained no objective standards as to knowledge or fitness of the applicant which could be challenged or reviewed by other examiners; and that the grading of the examination did not take into account the knowledge of the applicant upon the subject of fire fighting.<sup>12</sup> While upholding the commission on its procedures as fulfilling the requirements of the organic civil service law,<sup>13</sup> the court invalidated the eligible list because, in its opinion, the rating panel did not carry out the instructions of the commission. The nub of the question centers on the relationship between the rating of *individual* traits and the *over-all* rating. The judge made these criticisms of the actions of the examiners:

One examiner gave no grade or rating whatever to any of the candidates on the group test (meaning he gave them an over-all rating but no ratings on the individual traits).

One examiner gave only one of the candidates a grade on the personality trait designated on the sheet as "adaptability" and the one who was rated on this trait was not the plaintiff.

One examiner gave two candidates an "S," meaning superior, on all factors and on both parts of the test, that is, the Group and the Individual tests, but gave one candidate an over-all estimate of "A" and the other one of "B."

One examiner rated an applicant a "C" based on twelve "G's" and four "P's" but gave another applicant a "B" based on nine "G's," six "P's," and one "NA" (not applicable).

Accordingly, the court concluded these were examples of "arbitrary grading and rating without regard to measures and standards."

<sup>12</sup> The panel of five oral examiners were instructed to rate the candidates upon these traits: appearance, voice and language, manner and poise, comprehension and presentation of ideas, diplomacy, adaptability, maturity of judgment and emotional stability, and an over-all rating.

See also *Civil Service Board of the City of Phoenix et al. v. Warren et al.*, 244 P. (2d) 1157; *Weinberg v. Fields et al.*, 114 NYS (2d) 238; *Application of De Luca*, 125 NYS (2d) 766.

<sup>13</sup> See, *supra*, p. 177, for the Charter provisions.

Here we come back to our old question of the reviewability of judgments of oral examiners. One might easily conclude in reading the list of fatal deviations itemized above that the judge was indulging in a "mechanical application of fixed standards" decried by the court in the *Almasy* case and with advocating the impossible task of trying to equate mathematically ratings on individual traits with the over-all rating. It is perhaps time to emphasize that too much has been made of these individual traits. It is the over-all rating that is the determinant of fitness, with the individual traits serving primarily as guide lines and bench marks to the examiners, not as mandatory requirements. Conceding, as most courts seem to have done, that the oral interview (individual or group) meets the requirements of competitiveness—subjective though it may be—it is impracticable to shackle the examiners and order them to take into consideration only certain traits and to base their over-all rating only on those traits. It is a truism to state that we arrive at our judgments of people by various ways. Unquestionably from a psychological, to say nothing of a civil service standpoint, it is good practice for a commission to indicate to oral interviewers the traits which are the principal ingredients of a job. Also, in arriving at an over-all judgment of the candidate, to encourage the interviewers to take these traits into consideration. But this should amount to no more than a suggestion. And if the individual interviewer has not strictly followed the commission's instructions but has arrived at his over-all judgment through processes that are peculiar to himself, should such conduct be characterized as "arbitrary judgment" and "without regard to measures and standards"? As was recently stated:

Many standard tests of personality attempt to measure individual traits and as such may be useful. However, a head of a department who is seeking an executive assistant is usually not so much interested in the candidate's individual characteristics. Rather he is interested in a "whole" picture of him. Therefore, not only must we assess candidates in relation to each other in relation to norms for particular factors but also as whole persons. We must

have our procedures fashioned to produce a whole picture, a personal picture as well as a comparative one.<sup>14</sup>

No claim was made in the *Frazzini* case that the panel of examiners was incompetent. Accordingly, as long as subjective judgment is approved by the courts and the examiners are furnished with descriptions of the traits which are to be used as guideposts, and the panel gives indications of having in the main observed the procedures, it is submitted that a court should sustain the action as satisfying civil service requirements. Reviewability should be exercised very lightly and only under circumstances where the examiners have completely disregarded their instructions. Omissions of the examiners to rate each factor or the over-all rating failing to be mathematically representative of the ratings on individual factors, should not be considered as arbitrary grading, if the function and purpose of using the individual traits are properly recognized.<sup>15</sup>

The group oral interview was recently examined by the Supreme Court of the State of Washington.<sup>16</sup> A promotional examination for lieutenants in the Fire Department was involved. As in the *Frazzini* case, the group oral examination was challenged as not fulfilling the requirements of competitiveness. The Court rejected *Fink v. Finnegan*, preferring instead the *Almasy* case approving group oral examinations and stating, furthermore, that courts should interfere to overthrow actions of civil service bodies only when the "action is so capricious and arbitrary as to

evidence a total failure to exercise discretion and is, therefore, not a valid act."

This case, along with the *Almasy* and *Sloat* cases, represents progressive thinking on the part of higher state courts. Required to interpret civil service laws, in some cases dating back to the second and third decades of this century, these courts have kept up with the changes in selection techniques, particularly in the fields of examination and testing. They have recognized that written objective examinations which merely inquire into the technical capacity of the candidate are inadequate testing for supervisory positions involving the handling of human relations on the currently accepted psychological rather than traditional authoritarian basis. They have conceded that strict conformance to the old rule of objectivity is impossible in an examination in which the interviewer has to base his entire judgment on personality on the answers of a candidate and his interactions with other members of a group. And in the main the examiners have done a creditable job. The overwhelming evidence from jurisdictions using the individual and group oral is that in the vast majority of cases there is fairly close agreement between the majority of examiners on the panel as to the suitable candidates. This is not due to collusion nor to some special intuitive insight, but primarily because civil service commissions have tried to select examiners who have competence in assessing people. The selection of such examiners is the best assurance candidates may have that the examination is proceeding with "due process" and with full protection of their rights. Reviewability becomes merely a process of checking to see whether the commission has given proper notice of the content of the examinations; whether each candidate has been treated equally—not uniformly; whether the examiners have been thoroughly briefed on the traits and procedures; and whether the examiners have generally followed the framework of reference established for them.

It might be emphasized that group orals handled in the flexible manner herein advocated are accepted and used by private industry with indications of considerable

<sup>14</sup> Flanagan, Adkins, and Caldwell, *op. cit.*, p. 20. To the same effect Roberta Scott, *op. cit.*, pointing out that factor ratings should be excluded from final score computations on the theory that there is no evidence that such traits have additive qualities.

<sup>15</sup> Since the Denver Civil Service Commission labors under the "rule of one," it should have as much leeway as possible for flexible evaluation. The supervisor has no choice—if he wants the position filled—but to take the top man certified. Therefore, an evaluation of personality should not be treated by the Courts in a legalistic manner, requiring the Commission to conform to some mechanistic and rigid formula. This flexibility is needed to counterbalance the rigidity of the "rule of one."

<sup>16</sup> C. R. Stoor and S. S. Sampson, *appellants v. The City of Seattle, et al.*, 267 P. (2d) 902.

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success and improvement in selection techniques. It is time that the courts looked at this whole process of selection from a similar standpoint, and not from the negative view of whether a particular candidate has or has not enjoyed the full panoply of rights spelled out in civil service laws of ancient vintage and adopted under circumstances long since become obsolete.

## Conclusions

From this discussion certain conclusions may be derived:

1. Courts almost uniformly accept both the individual and group oral interview as acceptable exercises of civil service commissions' discretion. They are considered to satisfy the norms of competitiveness.
2. Courts will accept the decisions of civil service commissions and will challenge them only when they are considered arbitrary and capricious.
3. In determining reviewability of ex-

aminers' judgments, the question is whether the candidates have all been treated equally by the examiners—not whether a measurement has been used which can be reduced to mathematical accuracy.

4. How detailed a resumé of his observations the examiner must make remains somewhat clouded. The Denver Court hews rather a straight line on this. Inferences from the *Almassy* and *Stoor* cases seem to provide a greater degree of flexibility.

Having received judicial approval, the question as to whether the individual and group orals fit the criteria established reduces itself to a matter of procedural due process:

1. The instructions to the raters.
2. Definition of traits.
3. Equality of treatment of all candidates.
4. Some sort of a record made by the examiners which may be reviewed.



# Lost: One Junior Management Assistant

Paul J. Piccard

## Introduction

THE COST of the present loyalty-security program in the federal government could probably be measured in terms of many factors. Among the most important of these would be the damaging effect that it has on recruitment. At least two groups of people are now being discouraged from seeking or accepting employment in the national government. First, there are those who have only a general impression that there is something wrong and unpleasant in Washington today. Young people who have gone through high school and college since the end of World War II, who have never had a radical thought, and whose text books have been acceptable to the American Legion and the local real estate boards, have nothing to fear from a loyalty investigation, but many of them are reluctant to associate themselves with a civil service that has supported "twenty or twenty-one years of treason."

A more strictly defined, but still unmeasurable, category is composed of those who in the 1930's and early 1940's flirted with ideas that, *ex post facto*, have been called un-American. That these people were loyal Americans during the height of their radicalism, that the thoughts they held might not be un-American even today, and that only a very small number of professional patriots have attacked them, does not matter. The fact is that many potential civil servants in the age group of 30 to 45 feel the way the author of the following letter does.

## The Protest

The reputation of the Junior Management Assistant Examination being what it is, only a few thousand of the many thousands who are interested in such employment attempt to pass it. Of these, only a

relatively small number succeed. One of the select group receiving an "eligible" rating in the 1953-54 examination sent the following reply to inquiries he received from agencies employing Junior Management Assistants:

Gentlemen:

Thank you for your recent expression of interest in the possibility of using me as a JMA. At the time I took the examination last Fall, I had no employment prospects and I thought I might have to take my chances with a federal government position. Now, however, I have a more attractive appointment in view so I must decline any further consideration as a JMA.

One of my reasons for preferring a career outside the federal government at this time is the loyalty-security program now in effect. Some years ago I was a member of the American Veterans Committee. In that organization I was active on behalf of the AVC statement of principles, including an indorsement of private enterprise. I was instrumental in the local defeat of the infiltrating Communists. Nevertheless, bare membership is, I understand, reported as derogatory, "Unevaluated" information by the FBI. Furthermore, I have taken a position on race relations compatible with the Armed Forces' policy of integration rather than segregation [the author of this letter did not know when he wrote it that he could rely also on a unanimous Supreme Court to justify his position]; I was sympathetic to the late Senator Taft's housing proposals and his views on Communists in the universities; I agree with President Eisenhower on the need for an extended social security program; I deplore subversive attacks on the Voice of America whether those attacks come from Russia or Wisconsin; I think the Bill of Rights is a bulwark of democracy; I like most Herblock cartoons; I thought that President Roosevelt was right in attempting to preserve our capitalistic economy through minimal modifications; I approved of President Truman's battle against Communism all around the globe (including Korea); and I do not believe that the two decades following 1933 were years of treason. For these and other similarly conservative views I have been called a Communist. My accusers have usually been

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people who are miserably ignorant of the American political tradition and out of touch with our great democratic heritage. Despite the certainty that their accusations could eventually be refuted before any tribunal except one dedicated to the assumption that where there is smoke there is fire, these accusers could cause my suspension from federal employment at any time.

I have a family with three children . . . and very limited financial resources. I could not afford, either emotionally or economically, to undergo even a short period of suspension from any position. To be suspended from an internship program as a JMA would be to leave me in an untenable situation.

At the present time I am a public employee, and I hope to remain one throughout my life. I am very glad that the opportunity to serve my neighbors will be continued next year and that I shall not need to subject myself to the hazards of federal service.

Thank you again for your consideration of my application. I hope that on the JMA eligible roster there are sufficient numbers of bachelors, independently wealthy men, political eunuchs, and others able to ride out the loyalty-security program so that I shall not be missed. I remain grateful for the opportunity that you have offered and relieved that I can now pass it over.

### Postscript

Thinking with respect to loyalty and security is such today that some of the friends of the author of the above protest told him that they thought it took courage to go on record in such a manner. Included among these friends were some college faculty members. It is a sad commentary both on the academic profession and on federal personnel practices that a letter like the above could be regarded in such a light.

Others reading the letter got the impression that it was written by a "crank." This dodges the issue raised, but even so the author of the letter was sufficiently normal to receive inquiries from federal agencies participating in the JMA program and also to acquire a position that he regards as superior in some respects to a JMA appointment. As he said in his letter, the threat of suspension from a JMA position was only one factor in his rejection of further consideration under that program, but it is interesting to note that the position that he did accept does not have the salary prospects that are open to a Junior Management Assistant. Furthermore, when others remain silent, liberty must rely upon cranks for its defense.

Some students of government regard the adverse effect of the loyalty-security program on recruitment as a mixed evil. Those who are staunch supporters of state and local government and who have an abiding faith that the future of democracy lies at the lower levels, see in the troubles of the federal service a boon to the recruiting agencies of municipal, county, and state governments. Those who believe, on the other hand, that there is no future at all for any American government unless our national government can be made a success, will want to examine this loyalty-security program more carefully to see whether or not it is worth the cost. They will wish to see whether or not the same protection could be achieved without doing violence to the American tradition of diversity and without lowering the calibre of the civil service by constricting recruitment.

# Michigan's Test Record System

Norman Berkowitz

## Background

**I**N MARCH, 1953, the Michigan Civil Service Commission revised its technical record system to accomplish certain improvements in the examination program. Before discussing what the revised procedure does, a short description of the former record system will be given.

All examination material was filed in an examination folder. Folders were consecutively numbered and included: (1) announcements, (2) examination outlines with signatures of reviewing appointing authorities and outside experts, (3) section tabulation sheets, (4) examination tabulation sheets, (5) keyed examinations, (6) experience and training charts, (7) promotional potential record sheets, (8) multiplying factor sheet, (9) miscellaneous data.

Although this procedure provided a complete record of each examination, certain inadequacies were evident. There was no continuous record of the results of individual test sections. No exact identification of test sections could be made since many sections had identical names and numbers of items. Anticipated results could not be predicted. When small groups were tested, it was difficult to maintain minimum standards. Much time was wasted. Examination sections had to be retyped and proofread each time they were used. Proofreading, keying, and reviewing were the responsibility of the examiners and consumed a large amount of time. It can be seen that some overhaul of the record system seemed advisable.

## What Was Done

Under the system of standardization that was devised, each examination section is assigned a code number which consists of the month and year constructed and the initials of the examiner. Thus, a section titled Interviewing, constructed in September, 1952, by Ned Burns would be

identified with the designation: Interviewing 952 NB.

A section file system was inaugurated. The filing is by number of month and year (952 before 1052), then letter (DW before NB), and finally alphabetically for name of the section. Thus, Interviewing 952 NB is filed before Accounting 753 DW.

A keyed copy is placed in each of three separate folders. The first folder is for the joint use of the Assistant Deputy Director in charge of Technical Functions and the Chief of the Examination Section. This becomes the official permanent key file.

The second folder is for the examiners. Into this folder goes: (1) a keyed copy of the section; (2) a cumulative frequency sheet on which a running tabulation of the results of the section is kept; (3) a standard section record sheet listing each individual use of the section; (4) the names of the reviewers; and (5) the high, low, median, and quartile scores as well as the effective range. Finally, any pertinent information concerning the section, such as poor items, appropriateness for certain job areas, etc., is placed in this folder.

The third folder is for the use of the test scoring unit. Stencils are made and filed in these folders and a permanent scoring key is thus established for each test section. A section multiplying sheet is also included, indicating what the multiplying factor of the test section was for the various examinations in which it was used. This allows speedy scoring of late or otherwise unusual examination situations.

Finally, one additional file was set up. The typing unit established a similar file and filed by test section. This was found necessary to coordinate the stencil keys of the test scoring unit. To make them effective, an examination section had to be located in the exact position as previously. This became a simple procedure when the section filing system was set up for the typing unit. Since they had only one copy of a test section, they were always able, then, to retype exactly as before. An ad-

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ditional advantage was to observe which sections were most often used so that permanent steel plates could be made.

### Advantages

**Less Typing.**—Test sections no longer need to be retyped each time they are used in a new examination. This is possible because of the positive identification, a change made in page format which eliminates page and section numbers and inserts instructions for answering at the beginning of the booklet, and the ease of locating the test sections. In the past, the examiner's memory was depended upon for recalling when a particular section had been used.

**Less Proofreading.**—The reduction in the amount of proofreading gained many valuable hours for the examination staff and also reduced the number of errors that could slip into an examination. Further, since sections are now always retyped from the original, the possibility of compounding an error has been almost eliminated.

**Less Keying.**—Formerly, three keys were made of each examination. One was for the examiner's file, one for the scoring unit, and one for the Civil Service Assembly. This meant that every time a test section was reused in an examination it had to be rekeyed. Under the new system, once keys are made and distributed to the proper folders, they need not be rekeyed. A key is still made for the use of the Test Exchange Service of the Assembly. However, this key is produced by the test scoring unit so the examiner only has to do the original keying. The saving in the current method can be realized when it is remembered that formerly certain test sections were re-used ten, twenty, or even thirty times over a period of years and each time were keyed three times. Elimination of multiple keying, of course, also reduces the possibility of compounding errors.

**Less Reviewing.**—In the past, examinations have been reviewed as units. As a result, it was not uncommon for the same appointing authority to review the same material several times. In the examinations section, the test section folders include the standard section record sheet. This sheet lists each reviewer, his title, department or agency, and the examination

for which he reviewed the section. It is hoped that after a lengthy list of names is accumulated, the tendency on the part of the appointing authorities will be to dispense with much of the repeated review process and confine themselves primarily to new or comparatively new material. Having an easily obtainable list of several persons who have reviewed test sections also has a decided advantage in cases of appeal of examination material.

**Minimum Standards Can Be Established.**—Under the new record system, each standard section record sheet includes median quartile and other pertinent statistical data for each specific examination in which the test section is used. Thus, a glance at the sheet indicates that Interviewing 952 NB was used in the following examinations with the following results:

	Claims Clerk A	Interviewer I	Pers. Off. I	Pers. Tech. III
No. of				
Candidates ..	122	164	431	22
Highest Score .	21	24	24	25
Q <sub>3</sub> .....	13	16	15	20
Median .....	10	12	12	16
Q <sub>1</sub> .....	4	8	7	10
Lowest Score ..	0	1	0	5
Effec. Range ...	18	18	14	15

If it is desired to pass half the candidates, it would be a good guess to ask for a minimum score of about 10 for Claims Clerk A or similar positions; about 12 for beginning level personnel jobs; and about 16 for advanced personnel technicians. Repeating this process on each section enables the agency to predict minimum acceptable standards on future examinations even when confronted with only three or four candidates. If higher or lower standards are desired because of local labor market conditions, pay, etc., other minimum acceptable standards can be approximated.

**Other Advantages.**—The availability of statistics for many different levels and types of work has at least two other advantages. The examiner can determine which material is too difficult or too simple for varying groups and eliminate their use for a particular test battery. It also lends the agency backing in case of appeals.

# Public Administration: A Personal Approach

F. P. Dunnill

IT is as well to remind oneself now and then that Public Administration concerns people, and to try to distinguish its legitimate from its actual beneficiaries. One may, perhaps, even go further and make some tentative suggestions as to how public servants might apply themselves to their primary task of looking after people.

Let us begin by examining some of the more obvious heresies that obscure the connexion between the machinery of government and the people it is supposed to benefit. Consider first institutionalism—the conscious or unconscious belief that the system has life, virtue, validity of its own, mystically detached from the people it exists to serve. Hear two elderly civil servants concurring over coffee. “It’s nice to find old departments like ours helping each other out,” says one. “We’re always ready,” says the other with a wink, “to stretch a point for the Board of . . .” “I make no secret,” says a senior official, “that my first loyalty is to the office: individuals come second.” “When I’m considering a man for promotion,” says another, “I always ask myself whether he’s put himself out on behalf of the office. Does he play cricket, take part in social activities? It’s the same as it was at school: one can spot a good man that way.” Proper sentiments. Well, are they?

A second heresy is expertism—the belief that any job, however marginal, is worth doing supremely well. “If you want this

sum done,” cries one statistician, “for God’s sake don’t ask for the answer tomorrow. Let me do it properly, in my own time.” “I want this form reprinted, this or that refinement,” says another, “to get my figures just so much nearer perfection. Of course they’re perfectly serviceable at present, but . . .” “Don’t ask me for a snap decision on that,” says the administrator-lawyer, “I have my professional reputation to think of. Yes, yes, I know it’s urgent.” “We must avoid at all costs,” says the administrator-doctor, “Anything that might annoy the medical profession.” Honourable, sensible men! But who pays for their fastidiousness?

A third group of heretics comprises the carpetbaggers, the empire-builders who make the service their oyster. We find them taking good ideas and flogging them to death, crying their departmental wares in the market place, forming committees for the perpetuation of more committees, deploying their subordinates in intricate struggles that have little relation to the needs of the people who pay their salaries. Active, able, persuasive men. But public servants . . . ?

It does not end there, for there are other, subtler heretical categories: the quiet-lifers, the clear desk merchants, the formal logicians, the feuders, the cranks. One can extend the list indefinitely—and find a suitable niche for oneself. The point is that it is all too easy to forget, in the conditions that official flesh is heir to, that one’s first duty lies outside the service—with people.

But what people? Let us say, provisionally, those who, in a given situation, are least able to help themselves. One has only to pose the question, to state the tentative rule, to see how difficult—yet how fundamental—the problem is. Let us focus the discussion by examining briefly some of the pressures that will impinge upon a modern public servant, a Principal, say,

**Editor’s Note:** This article by Mr. Dunnill of Her Majesty’s General Register Office won the 1953 Haldane Essay Competition and was published in the 1954 Spring issue of *Public Administration*. In announcing the award, the judges wrote: “We have decided to recommend a comparatively short essay, because its sentiments seemed to us both timely and chastening for all public officers and because they were expressed with wit, elegance, and precision.”

The Civil Service Assembly wishes to thank Mr. D. N. Chester, Editor of *Public Administration*, for granting permission to reprint the essay.

## PUBLIC PERSONNEL REVIEW

in a fair size Ministry, who sets out to apply our rule.

Consider the external pressures first. Our man must of course contrive to get on with his Assistant Secretary; not slavishly, by conceding every point at issue, but by giving Caesar more or less what Caesar thinks his due. He must be on fair terms with his colleagues or face ostracism, with his subordinates or risk the withdrawal of detailed information—which he needs and they have. He must co-operate—or at the very least appear to co-operate—with other departments and with local authorities, keep an eye on Parliament, and, if he is dealing with quasi-legal matters, the Courts. From all this he will emerge, if he is a man of character, unbowed but noticeably bloody; and it is obvious that many of his decisions, if not all, will bear the mark of the pressures to which he is subjected.

Take next the internal, often subconscious influences. We are all the creatures of our own experience; our sympathy will in general be most readily extended to people of the kind we know. We shall not consciously withhold it from others, but the danger of unconscious prejudice is obvious. If we happen to be Christian we will understand Christians; white, whites; a graduate, graduates; middle class, the middle classes; if we are articulate we will tend to assume that others are articulate too. We will frequently make an effort to put ourselves in the other fellow's shoes—sometimes even overdo it. But the fact remains—and no honest observer would deny it—that there is a constant tendency for the people at the bottom of the chain—the supposed *cestui qui trust* of governmental activity—to be seen as through a glass, darkly, by the people at the top. Sometimes they are lost sight of altogether.

How then, in practice, can we best keep in mind the interests of those who, while affected by the decisions we are taking, cannot intervene effectively to help themselves? The first necessity is to be, and, as age adapts us, to remain, aware that the problem exists. If we are conscious of the pressures to which our background and environment subject us we are on the road to salvation. They are, in the main, nothing

to be ashamed of. Each of us is, after all, in the public service for what he can get out of it. Some of us want power, some security, some respectability, some an opportunity to serve, some a little of each. Many of us have forgotten, or have never asked ourselves, what it is we want. It does no harm to pose the question. Prejudices are like submarines—innocuous when surfaced. Once we suspect bias we can take steps to counter it. No one walks with a limp for long, if he can help it.

The second point is to grasp the value of doing nothing. Often the favour that people most wish of us is to be left alone. A welfare state owes its citizens many things—homes, schools, hospitals—and asks many in return; but the best gift at its disposal is the freedom, within the limits of social safety, for each of us to spend his time and money as he wishes. This does not imply abdication, only restraint and an understanding of the probability that what helps someone will hurt someone else. The administrator should ask himself, in short: "Is the burden I am imposing really necessary?" He should remember that the better administration is, the less there need be of it.

The third point is to look behind labels. "H.M. Government is of the opinion . . ." Yes, but whose view is it, and how strongly does he hold it? "This man is a troublemaker." Maybe, but is he in the right? "It is necessary for technical reasons to do so and so." What reasons? "My Association would never tolerate such a course." Does this merely mean that the general secretary hadn't thought of it? Above all, we must be careful how we use phrases like "the public interest," "the requirements of public policy," "the force of public opinion." There may be a sense in which, in Donne's words, we are required to: "Knit the sinews of the city's mystic body," but it is probably more helpful to consider the actual needs of individuals, about whose bodily necessities and simple aspirations there is nothing particularly mystic. Admittedly problems get harder as groups get larger and interests conflict; but, for us, the individual is the only safe point of departure. It does no good—and may do much harm—to forget it.

Fourthly we must suspect compromise, which breeds paper, which breeds more paper, which, unless we are very careful, will bury us all. There is a point, of course, at which we must all agree to differ. One cannot be forever digging up the tree to see what stunts it. But compromise short of this point—tired, lazy, cowardly or placatory of the powers that have always been—is the enemy of good administration. The assumption that of three given ways the middle is likely to be best accounts for much of the flabbiness—and cost—of English administration. Once the need to compromise has taken the teeth out of a scheme, how much better to drop it! But the public is full of putrescent bodies, assiduously preserved by people who are paid to know better. Every administrative corporal should carry a humane-killer in his knapsack.

Finally, we must keep logic in its place. We all know the empiricist who manages tolerably badly by disregarding it altogether and following an inner light that, oddly enough, seems to accord fairly well with his master's prejudices. But an opposite danger (that of assuming that there is a formally logical answer to every administrative question) is expressed by the

fellow who will set out your problem, and the possible lines of action, in neat formal compartments that leave you, practically speaking, exactly where you were. The truth is, of course, that verbal pseudo-logic frequently obscures the true logic of a situation which can only be assessed in broader, rougher, human terms. "Always avoid emotional arguments," advises the formal logician. But where should we be if we tried to expel the emotions—anger, compassion, humour, a sense of the ridiculous—from public administration? We all have feelings. Why deny them? Without humanity we should be mere dummies, stuffed with statutory instruments, bundled together with red tape. If we are to err—and we shall—let us be found tempering the wind to the shorn lamb, not defending, in the last ditch, some indefensible regulation.

What do we most need, then? Self-knowledge, the capacity to refrain from the useless or ridiculous, to look beneath the surface, to adjure pointless compromise and, above all, to transmute our problems into human terms. Will those qualities make a good administrator? Not alone; but a trace of them would redeem a thousand bad ones!

# How To Be Interviewed

Don H. Roney and  
Charles H. Cushman

**Y**OU HAVE indicated that you are interested in working for the public service. Perhaps you have taken a written examination. Now, we are inviting you to appear for an interview.

As you contemplate this phase of the examination, you may feel—as do many other candidates—that the choice of weapons and time of attack are on the side of the examiners. And this is more or less true. But a good share of your attitude probably grows out of the belief that it is not possible to prepare for an interview and that there are no rules to follow during the interview.

Our purpose is to point out some things you can do in advance that will help you and some good rules to follow and pitfalls to avoid while you are being interviewed.

### What Is an Interview Supposed To Test?

The written examination is designed to test the technical knowledge and competence of the candidate; the oral is designed to evaluate intangible qualities, not readily measured otherwise, and to establish a list showing the relative fitness of each candidate, *as measured against his competitors*, for the position sought. Scoring is not on the basis of "right" or "wrong," but on a sliding scale of values ranging from "not passable" to "outstanding." As a matter of fact, it is possible to achieve a relatively low score without a single "incorrect" answer because of evident weakness in the qualities being measured.

Occasionally an examination may consist entirely of an oral test—either an individual or a group oral. In such cases, information is sought concerning the technical knowledges and abilities of the candidate, since there has been no written examination for this purpose. More commonly, however, an oral test is used to supplement a written examination.

### Who Conducts Interviews?

The composition of oral boards varies among different jurisdictions. In nearly all,

*Editor's Note:* Many public personnel agencies provide applicants with general information on written tests . . . what they are like . . . what to look for . . . how to "take" them. The idea behind this public relations service is to help a candidate do his best and cut down possible criticism of examining methods.

Mr. Roney and Mr. Cushman believe it is a good idea to provide similar information about the interview. This article was adapted from one they prepared for the International Association of Personnel in Employment Security which was published in the September, October, and November, 1952, issues of *IAPES News*. Don H. Roney is Chairman of the Council on Professional Advancement, IAPES. Charles H. Cushman is Personnel Administrator, State of Rhode Island.

The accompanying article is being reprinted in pamphlet form, suitable for mailing to prospective candidates along with interview notices. Personnel agencies may order the pamphlet from the Civil Service Assembly, 1313 E. 60th, Chicago 37, Illinois, at the quantity prices listed below. A 10% discount is given for cash with order.

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a representative of the personnel department serves as chairman. One of the members of the board may be a representative of the department in which the candidate would work. In some cases, "outside experts" are used, and frequently a business man or some other representative of the general public is asked to serve. Labor and management or other special groups may be represented. The aim is to secure the services of experts in the appropriate field.

However the board is composed, it is a good idea (and not at all improper or unethical) to ascertain in advance of the interview who the members are and what groups they represent. When you are introduced to them, you will have some idea of their backgrounds and interests, and at



least you will not stutter and stammer over their names.

#### What To Do Before the Interview

While knowledge about the board members is useful and takes some of the surprise element out of the interview, there is other preparation which is more substantive. It is possible to prepare for an oral—in several ways:

1. *Keep a copy of your application and review it carefully before the interview.* This may be the only document before the oral board, and the starting point of the interview. Know what experience and education you have listed there, and the sequence and dates of it. Sometimes the board will ask you to review the highlights of your experience for them; you should not have to hem and haw doing it.

2. *Study the class specification and the examination announcement.* Usually the oral board has one or both of these to guide them. The qualities, characteristics, or knowledges required by the position sought are stated in these documents. They offer valuable clues as to the nature of the oral interview. For example, if the job involves supervisory responsibilities, the announcement will usually indicate that knowledge of modern supervisory methods and the qualifications of the candidate as a supervisor will be tested. If so, you can expect such questions, frequently in the form of a hypothetical situation which you are expected to solve. *Never* go into an oral without knowledge of the duties and responsibilities of the job you seek.

3. *Think through each qualification required.* Try to visualize the kind of questions you would ask if you were a board member. How well could you answer them? Try especially to appraise your own knowledge and background in each area, *measured against the job sought*, and identify any areas in which you are weak. Be critical and realistic—don't flatter yourself.

4. *Do some general reading in areas in which you feel you may be weak.* For example, if the job involves supervision and your past experience has *not*, some general reading in supervisory methods and practices, particularly in the field of human re-

lations might be useful. *Don't* study agency procedures or detailed manuals. The oral board will be testing your understanding and capacity, *not* your memory.

5. *Get a good night's sleep and watch your general health and mental attitude.* You'll want a clear head at the interview. Take care of a cold or other minor ailment, and, of course, *no hangovers*.

#### What To Do the Day of the Interview

Now comes the day of the interview itself. Give yourself plenty of time to get there. Plan to arrive somewhat ahead of the scheduled time, particularly if your appointment is in the fore part of the day. If a previous candidate fails to appear, the board might be ready for you a bit early. By early afternoon an oral board is almost invariably behind schedule if there are many candidates, and you may have to wait. Take along a book or magazine to read, or your application to review. But leave any extraneous material in the waiting room when you go in for your interview. In any event, relax and compose yourself.

The matter of dress is important. The board is forming impressions about you—from your experience, your manners, your attitudes, and from your appearance. Give your personal appearance careful attention. Dress your *best*, but not your flashiest. Choose conservative, appropriate clothing, and be sure it and you are immaculate. This is a business interview, and your appearance should indicate that you regard it as such. Besides, being well groomed and properly dressed will help boost your confidence.

Sooner or later, some one will call your name and escort you into the interview room. *This is it.* From here on you're on your own. It's too late for any more preparation. But, remember, you asked for this opportunity to prove your fitness, and you are here because your request was granted.

#### What Happens When You Go In?

The usual sequence of events will be as follows: The clerk (who is often the board stenographer) will introduce you to the chairman of the oral board, who will intro-

duce you to each other member of the board. Acknowledge the introductions before you sit down. Don't be surprised if you find a microphone facing you or a stenotypist sitting by. Oral interviews are usually recorded, in the event of an appeal or other review.

Usually the chairman of the board will open the interview by reviewing the highlights of your education and work experience from your application—primarily for the benefit of the other members of the board, as well as to get the material into the record. Don't interrupt or comment unless there is an error or significant misinterpretation; if so, don't hesitate. But don't quibble about insignificant matters. Usually, also, he will ask you some question about your education, your experience, or your present job—partly to get you started talking, to establish the interviewing "rapport." He may start the actual questioning, or turn it over to one of the other members. Frequently each member undertakes the questioning on a particular area, one in which he is perhaps most competent. So you can expect each member to participate in the examination. And because the time is limited, you may expect some rather abrupt switches in the direction the questioning takes. Don't be upset by it. Normally, a board member will not pursue a single line of questioning unless he discovers a particular strength or weakness.

After each member has participated, the chairman will usually ask if any member has any further questions, then will ask you if you have anything you wish to add. Unless you are expecting this question, it may floor you. Or worse, it may start you off on an extended, extemporaneous speech. The board is not usually seeking more information. The question is principally to offer you a last opportunity to present further qualifications or to indicate that you have nothing to add. So, if you feel that a significant qualification or characteristic has been overlooked, it is proper to point it out in a sentence or so. Don't compliment the board on the thoroughness of their examination—they've been sketchy, and they know it. If you wish, merely say, "No thank you, I have nothing further to add."

This is a point where you can "talk yourself out" of a good impression or fail to present an important bit of information. *Remember, you close the interview yourself.*

The chairman will then say, "That's all, Mr. Smith, thank you." Don't be startled; the interview is over, and quicker than you think. Say, "Thank you and good morning," gather up your belongings and take your leave. Save your sigh of relief for the other side of the door.

#### How To Put Your Best Foot Forward

Throughout all this process, you may feel that the board individually and collectively is trying to pierce your defenses, to seek out your hidden weaknesses, and to embarrass and confuse you. Actually, this is not true. They are obliged to make an appraisal of your qualifications for the job you are seeking, and they *want to see you in your best light*. Remember, they must interview all candidates and a noncooperative candidate may become a failure in spite of their best efforts to bring out his qualifications. Your job is to put your best foot forward. Here are some suggestions as to how you can do it.

1. *Be natural. Keep your attitude confident, but not cocky.* If you are not confident that you can do the job, don't expect the board to be. Don't apologize for your weaknesses, try to bring out your strong points. The board is interested in a positive, not a negative presentation. Cockiness will antagonize any board member, and make him wonder if you are covering up a weakness by a false show of strength.

2. *Get comfortable, but don't lounge or sprawl.* Sit erectly but not stiffly. A careless posture may lead the board to conclude you are careless in other things, or at least that you are not impressed by the importance of the occasion to you. Either conclusion is natural, even if incorrect. Don't fuss with your clothing, or with a pencil or an ash tray. Your hands may occasionally be useful to emphasize a point; don't let them detract from your presentation by becoming a point of distraction.

3. *Don't wisecrack or make small talk.* This is a serious situation, and your atti-

tude should show that you consider it as such. Further, the time of the board is limited; they don't want to waste it, and neither should you.

4. *Don't exaggerate your experience or abilities.* In the first place, from information in the application, from other interviews and other sources, the board may know more about you than you think; in the second place, you probably won't get away with it in the first place. An experienced board is rather adept at spotting such a situation. Don't take the chance.

5. *If you know a member of the board, don't make a point of it, yet don't hide it.* Certainly you're not fooling him, and probably not the other members of the board. Don't try to take advantage of your acquaintanceship—it will probably bounce back on you.

6. *Don't dominate the interview.* Let the board do that. They will give you the clues—don't assume that you have to do all the talking. Realize that the board has a number of questions to ask you, and don't try to take up all the interview time by showing off your extensive knowledge of the answer to the first one.

7. *Be attentive.* You only have twenty minutes or so, and you should keep your attention at its sharpest throughout. When a member is addressing a problem or a question to you, give him your undivided attention. Address your reply principally to him, but don't exclude the other members of the board.

8. *Don't interrupt.* A board member may be stating a problem for you to analyze. He will ask you a question when the time comes. Let him state the problem, and wait for the question.

9. *Make sure you understand the question.* Don't try to answer until you are sure what the question is. If it's not clear restate it in your own words or ask the board member to clarify it for you. But don't haggle about minor elements.

10. *Reply promptly but not hastily.* A common entry on oral board rating sheets is "candidate responded readily," or "candidate hesitated in replies." Respond as promptly and quickly as you can, but don't jump to a hasty, ill-considered answer.

11. *Don't be peremptory in your an-*

*swers.* A brief answer is proper—but don't fire your answer back. That is a losing game from your point of view. The board member can probably ask questions much faster than you can answer them.

12. *Don't try to create the answer you think the board member wants.* He is interested in what kind of a mind you have and how it works—not in playing games. Furthermore, he can usually spot this practice and will usually grade you down on it.

13. *Don't switch sides in your reply merely to agree with a board member.* Frequently, a member will take a contrary position merely to draw you out and to see if you are willing and able to defend your point of view. Don't start a debate, yet don't surrender a good position. If a position is worth taking, it is worth defending.

14. *Don't be afraid to admit an error in judgment if you are shown to be wrong.* The board knows that you are forced to reply without any opportunity for careful consideration. Your answer may be demonstrably wrong. If so, admit it and get on with the interview.

15. *Don't dwell at length on your present job.* The opening question may relate to your present assignment. Answer the question but don't go into an extended discussion. You are being examined for a new job, not your present one. As a matter of fact, try to phrase all your answers in terms of the job for which you are being examined.

16. *Don't bring in extraneous comments or tell lengthy anecdotes.* Keep your replies to the point. If you feel the need of an illustration from your personal experience, keep it short. Leave out the minor details. Make sure the incident is real and not imaginary.

17. *Don't be technical or ponderous.* Keep agency gobbledegook out of your replies for two reasons: First, some members of the board will probably not understand you, and second, if they do, they will charge you with an inbred vocabulary. They are not interested in a play-back of the agency manuals.

18. *Don't use slang terms.* Many a good reply has been weakened by the injection of slang terms or other language faults. Frequently, the board will note any slips



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of grammar or other evidence of carelessness in your speech habits.

19. *Leave your exhibits at home.* The board is not interested in pictures of your family, your letters of reference, clippings about your office, or new procedures you have devised, or the debating medals you won in high school.

20. *Don't be ingratiating.* The "soft soap routine" seldom works with an oral board. Be pleasant and smile occasionally, but do it naturally and don't overdo it.

#### Good Luck to You

Probably you will forget most of these "do's" and "don't's" when you walk into the oral interview room. Even remembering them all will not insure you a passing grade. Perhaps you didn't have the qualifications in the first place. But remembering them *will* help you to put your best foot forward, without treading on the toes of the board members.

Rumor and popular opinion to the contrary notwithstanding, an oral board wants you to make the best appearance possible. They know you are under pressure—but they also want to see how you respond to it as a guide to what your reaction would be under the pressures of the job you seek. They would rather give you a good grade than fail you but theirs is a heavy responsibility, for upon their decisions will depend, in some measure, the success or failure of a public service and the expenditure of large sums of the taxpayer's money. Whether it is contained in the area of examination or not, they will be influenced by the degree of poise you display, the personal traits you show, and the manner in which you respond. It is up to you to convince the board that you possess the necessary qualifications to assure satisfactory performance in the position you seek. Proper preparation should assist you in making this demonstration. We hope that this statement will help you do your best.

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# Staffs and Budgets of Public Personnel Agencies

Robert J. Batson

THE PERSONNEL administrator, like any administrator, is interested in comparing his agency's budget and staff and his own personal salary with the budget, staff and director's salary in other personnel agencies. To facilitate this comparison, the Civil Service Assembly periodically conducts a survey of "staffs and budgets of public personnel agencies." The most recent such survey was addressed in May, 1954, to approximately 650 public personnel agencies in the United States and Canada. This article highlights some of the findings of that survey.

Of the 650 agencies addressed, 259 returned the questionnaire. Normally such a response might not be considered adequate for analytical purposes. However, the very nature of the inquiry tended to limit severely the response. It was known at the time the questionnaires were circulated that probably as many as thirty to forty percent of the agencies addressed did not have any full-time employees. In many of these personnel agencies, the detailed work of the agency is conducted either by the part-time citizen civil service or personnel board or by officials who also have administrative responsibilities other than personnel. Further, most of the agencies have very small personnel budgets, frequently less than \$1000 per year. In view of these facts, it was anticipated that most of the agencies which fell in this "budget-less," "staffless" category would not return the questionnaire. As it turned out, 77 out of the 259 returned questionnaires also came from this same group and had to be eliminated from the final report.

The 182 reports analyzed in this summary represent, then, a very high proportion of public personnel agencies which have (a) at least one full-time worker and (b) a separate "personnel" budget. These

agencies, with the exception of the Civil Service Commission of Canada, are state (or provincial) and local government agencies. The size and unique problems of the U.S. Federal Government make it inappropriate to compare the personnel budgets and staffs of either the Civil Service Commission or Departmental Personnel Offices with those of agencies none of which have as many as five percent of the employees of the U.S. Government.

## Personnel Director Salaries

**United States.** The participating agencies were asked to report the current salary being paid the Personnel Director (defined as "the full-time administrative head of the personnel agency"). Information was supplied on 167 such persons. This information is summarized in Tables I and II.

The median salary reported for public personnel directors in the United States was \$7080. Fifty percent of the salaries fall between \$6000 and \$8892.

As was expected, the analysis in Table I confirms that the median salary increases with the number of employees covered by the personnel program. Thus, in programs with less than 1000 employees, the median salary was \$6000; 1000-1999 employees, \$6720; 2000-4999 employees, \$8200; and in agencies with more than 5000 employees the median salary was \$10,000. The variations within each size group must not be overlooked, however. At least one personnel director in the "under 1000" category made a greater salary (\$8340) than did fifty percent of the directors in the 2000-4999 group. Moreover, almost fifty percent of the directors in the 1000 group had higher salaries than did the lowest paid director in the "5000 and up" category.

**Canada.** Thirteen Canadian jurisdictions reported the salaries of the full-time administrative head of their personnel

• Robert J. Batson is Personnel Analyst, Civil Service Assembly of the U.S. and Canada.

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TABLE I  
Salaries of Public Personnel Directors by Type of Jurisdiction

	Lowest	Q <sub>1</sub>	Median	Q <sub>2</sub>	Highest
United States (154) .....	\$2,650	\$6,000	\$7,080	\$ 8,892	\$14,500
States—General coverage <sup>a</sup> (21) .....	5,400	7,500	9,420	10,800	13,500
States—Partial coverage <sup>a</sup> (18) .....	4,800	5,700	6,600	7,500	12,108
Counties (24) .....	2,650	6,300	7,320	8,560	13,291
Cities—Small <sup>b</sup> (54) .....	3,300	5,060	6,000	7,020	9,367
—Large <sup>c</sup> (37) .....	4,888	7,040	8,400	10,000	14,500
Canada (13) .....	4,881	6,500	9,000	10,500	13,500

<sup>a</sup> For details see *The Book of the States, 1954-55*, page 180.

<sup>b</sup> Less than 2000 employees.

<sup>c</sup> More than 2000 employees.

TABLE II  
Salaries of Public Personnel Directors by Size of Jurisdiction (U.S. only)

Number of Employees	Annual Salary				
1— 999 (44) .....	\$2,650	\$4,848	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,900	\$ 8,340
1000—1999 (41) .....	3,300	5,700	6,720	7,800	9,367
2000—4999 (34) .....	4,788	6,749	8,200	9,660	10,920
5000 plus (35) .....	6,100	8,600	10,000	12,000	14,500
All (154) .....	2,650	6,000	7,080	8,892	14,500

agency. The median salary for this group is \$9000. Only one of these Canadian agencies covered less than 1000 employees and six had more than 5000 employees. Accordingly, these figures are more nearly comparable with the two U.S. groups representing the largest number of employees than with the whole U.S. group.

**Private Industry.** Public personnel administrators will be interested in comparing their salaries with those paid their counterparts in private industry. Professor Dale Yoder of the University of Minnesota reports the following median salaries for personnel directors' salaries in various industry groups:<sup>1</sup>

Manufacturing .....	\$ 8,508
Trade .....	9,000
Construction .....	9,500
Banking, etc. ....	8,250
Transportation .....	10,333
Other utilities .....	9,318
Miscellaneous .....	8,188

<sup>1</sup> Yoder, Dale and Wilson, Lenore N., "Salaries and Ratios in Industrial Relations: 1954," *Personnel*, July, 1954, pp. 5-10.

### Comparing Staffs and Budgets

Each year at budget time, the personnel administrator must be prepared to face a barrage of detailed questions on his operations. Inevitably, somewhere in the budget sessions or in the legislative hearings, the question will come up: "How does this budget (or this number of personnel workers) compare with the budget of other agencies?" Usually the person who poses the question does not understand the difficulties involved in comparing the budget or staffing requirements of different agencies. No two personnel programs are alike! Even in municipal agencies which may operate under the same state law, as in Illinois, Ohio and New York, local conditions will shape the actual administration of the program, with consequent differences in staffing and budgetary requirements. Accordingly, the following factors must be taken into consideration when making inter-agency comparisons:

#### 1. Scope of Program. The services the

agency performs are of course the most important determinant of cost in any program. There is wide variation in the services performed by public personnel agencies. Most of them have certain activities in common—recruiting, examining, classification are the “bread and butter” activities of most personnel agencies. There are many other “personnel” activities, however, which constitute a major segment of the activities of some personnel programs but which have no place in the programs of other agencies. Training, competitive promotions, certification of payrolls, preparation of payrolls, service rating, pay administration—these are some of the activities included in the second group. Even when two agencies have responsibility for the same activities, the relative emphasis in staff time will vary considerably. In 1952, the Civil Service Assembly attempted to gather comparative data on the amount of staff time devoted to the various aspects of the personnel program. It was found, however, that few personnel agencies keep records of this kind. Accordingly, no further attempt has been made to gather this kind of information.

**2. Quality of Services Performed.** There are many factors which make one agency more efficient than another. The quality of employee performance, the number and kind of employees, legal restrictions, etc. influence “how well” the job is done. One personnel agency may have a comprehensive classification program which includes annual review of a major portion of its positions. Another agency may be able to review only those positions for which reclassification is requested by the employee. Some personnel agencies prepare a substantial number of new test items for each examination and conduct extensive item analyses on their examinations. Other agencies do no test research and re-use old test items with few if any changes. Clearly, an agency's budget will reflect differences like these.

**3. Cost Differentials.** There are significant differences in the costs of goods and services between various regions of the United States and between the United States and Canada. The wages of a typist in an eastern metropolitan area may be double

those in a rural Southern community. Many items in the category of supplies and equipment are more expensive “West of the Mississippi.”

**4. Legal Requirements and Fixed Costs.** Some agencies are required to spend major portions of their annual budget for advertising examinations; others are not. Commissioners of some personnel agencies receive substantial compensation for their services; other commissioners receive only nominal compensation for similar services. Although most public personnel agencies occupy rent-free quarters in public buildings, other agencies must make rental payments out of their budgets.

An analysis of the budget figures reported in this survey shows that non-salary costs of this nature may vary from 5% or less to as much as 40-45% of the total annual budget. The differences in the budgets of agencies which fall into these extremes will be considerable although there may be little or no difference in the services actually performed by the agency.

**5. Departmental Personnel Organization.** Most of the agencies included in this report are “central” personnel agencies which service a number of “line” departments. In some cases the departments served have their own personnel workers to perform many day-to-day personnel functions. In other jurisdictions there are no departmental personnel workers. Other things being equal, a central personnel agency will need a smaller budget if departmental employees relieve it of many of the detailed operations of personnel administration.

With these limitations in mind and in an effort to minimize as many of them as possible, two specially computed ratios have been selected for analysis: (1) the staffing ratio, that is the number of employees served by each personnel worker (Table III); and (2) the ratio of personnel staff salaries to total payroll for covered employees (Table IV).

#### Staffing Ratios

The number of employees “served” by each member of the personnel agency staff is a rough measure of the work load of the agency. Clearly, if this ratio is 1:200

TABLE III  
Number of Employees per Personnel Staff Member

	<i>Lowest Ratio</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Highest Ratio</i>
States—General Coverage (23) .....	98	320	1090
States—Partial Coverage (19) .....	122	204	413
Counties (25) .....	127	233	705
Cities (94) .....	46	268	969
Misc. <sup>a</sup> (8) .....	90	132	857
Canadian (13) .....	200	311	749
All (182) .....	46	259	1090

<sup>a</sup> Six publicly owned utilities and two programs covering nonacademic employee of school systems.

(one staff member per 200 employees) either the quality or the quantity of services will be greater than if the staffing ratio is 1:350.

The data summarized in Table III shows that the median staffing ratio of the 182 reporting agencies is 1:259. Leaving aside the miscellaneous category, which is too small to justify any generalizations, the most favorably staffed agencies seem to be the states which have civil service coverage only for the "grant-in-aid departments," that is, welfare, health, and employment security. The median staffing ratio of this group is 1:204. In contrast, the states with general coverage have, on the average, a much less favorable staffing ratio, the median being 1:320.

The available information indicates that the personnel function in private industry is generally in a more favorable po-

sition than the public service. Yoder and Wilson report the following staffing ratios for industry groups:<sup>2</sup>

Manufacturing .....	1:143
Trade .....	1:147
Construction .....	1:100
Banking, etc. ....	1: 84
Transportation .....	1: 93
Other utilities .....	1:185
All .....	1:143

The reader should bear in mind, of course, that the functions of personnel offices in industry and in the public service are seldom the same. The author believes that the responsibilities assigned public personnel agencies, especially examination and classification, require far more in the way of staff resources than do some of the responsibilities which typify industrial

<sup>2</sup> Yoder, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

TABLE IV  
Percentage of Personnel Salary Budget to Total Annual Payroll

	<i>Highest Ratio</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Lowest Ratio</i>
States—General Coverage (16) .....	.98	.44	.25
States—Partial Coverage (13) .....	.78	.61	.38
Counties (21) .....	1.04	.60	.37
Cities (80) .....	1.9	.45	.12
Misc. (8) .....	1.45	.97	.19
Canadian (11) .....	.46	.37	.14
All (149) .....	1.9	.48	.12



personnel offices. And if this is indeed the case, public personnel agencies are at an even greater disadvantage in the matter of staffing than their industrial counterparts, for they are charged with greater and more costly responsibilities and are given a great deal less of the "wherewithal" to carry them out.

### Salary Ratios

Total personnel agency budgets are difficult to compare, as pointed out above, because the budgets of some agencies contain some items, such as rent, commissioners' stipends, compulsory legal advertising, etc., which others do not contain. There is one budget item, however, which is common to all budgets and that is the "personal services" or "staff salaries" item. When this item is computed as a percentage of total salaries paid to covered employees, it furnishes the basis of a realistic comparison between agencies. Not the least of its virtues is that it tends to eliminate geographic pay and cost-of-living differentials. It does not, admittedly, account for differences in scope and quality of program. No formula or ratio yet devised can account for such differences, however. Quality and quantity will have to be compared on the basis of individual analyses of each agency compared, an unenviable task, and one which the author leaves to the reader!

"Salary ratios" for the 149 reporting agencies whose response permitted such calculations are summarized in Table IV. The median "salary ratio" for these jurisdictions is .48% (forty-eight hundredths of one percent). Again, the "partial coverage" states come off in the most favorable position, once more leaving out of con-

sideration the small number in the "miscellaneous" category.

### In Conclusion

"What *should* a Personnel Director be paid?"

"What kind of budget *should* a personnel agency have?"

"How many employees are *needed* to staff a personnel program?"

These are questions which cannot be given a final answer by a survey of this kind. Used with care, however, the data here reported can assist administrators in the analysis of their own budget, staffs and salaries.

In the final analysis, budget preparation for a given agency must start with an analysis of the responsibilities assigned the agency and an estimate of the staff needed to carry out these responsibilities. To this estimate must be added fixed costs, such as commissioners' salaries, rent, supplies and equipment, etc. An agency already in operation will best start with the current year's budget, analyze what is needed to do present tasks better or to assume new duties. A newly established agency may need to place more reliance on comparative data in preparing its *first* budget. In either case, however, the presentation to an appropriating body of a detailed analysis of an agency's program and needs is a better "budget justification" than a comparison with the budgets and staffs of other agencies.

In conclusion, it needs to be emphasized that this article is not intended to tell what budgets, staffs and personnel director salaries "should be." Its purpose is to provide some background facts against which a given agency may make an intensive study of its own needs.

## personnel

## opinions

- What is the thinking of experienced personnel people on everyday problems of personnel policy and practice? Their views can often provide readers of *Public Personnel Review* with cues to sound, constructive policy-making.

The editors have posed the same question to a number of experienced personnel people and have asked them to comment on the various points it raises. Here's what they say.

### The Question . . . .

*What is a sound policy for handling maternity leave in the public service?*

### The Replies . . . .

MARVIN W. STRATE, Principal Personnel Examiner, Kansas City, Missouri.

What is a sound policy for handling maternity leave in the public service? The fact that the question should come to be asked at all is significant in pointing up the changes that have taken place in the labor market (no pun intended) during the past ten or fifteen years of full employment; the achievement by women of economic status, i.e., market value, equivalent to that formerly enjoyed, if that is the proper word, exclusively by men; and the competitive facts of life which have obliged employers to even consider granting married women employees any right to return to a job following what the medics call parturition.

1. Should sick leave cover pregnancy? Where it is possible to accrue substantial liabilities of sick leave, there should be positive limitations on its use for maternity leave, since the public service like any other business, has at best only a long-term interest in the propagation of the race. The woman anticipating a blessed event is the object of misty-eyed solicitude, but the cruel fact is that her usefulness as an employee is distinctly impaired, both during and after the processes leading to accouchement. To what extent the employer should pick up the check, it seems to me should be

dictated by cold budget considerations and not by sentiment.

2. Do many mothers return to their work? For reasons which are not entirely clear to the writer, our actual return-to-work-after-having-a-baby experience has been rather good, but not statistically, as the boys say, significant. Needless to say, the employed woman with one or more small children owes at best only a divided loyalty to her employer; her absences may be frequent and with abruptly limited, if any, notice.

3. How long should mothers be absent? Circumstances alter cases, but a rule should be prescribed and loopholes stated: not beyond the seventh month and not sooner than three months post-parturient, the rule to be suitably vitiated by exceptions to take care of the "policy" cases in the interest of the public service, which on occasion, may chance to coincide with the interests of the employee.

4. Should an agency seek help from the medical profession in setting rules? Witness declines to answer on grounds of stirring up a bore's nest of inter-professional charges and counter-charges each impugning the ambivalence of the other.

5. Which is better—leave of absence or resignation with reemployment rights? Departments were asked what they would do as a matter of practice in granting extended maternity leave. Since actual cases have not been numerous, some replies represent personal opinion as to what MIGHT be done if the situation arose. Out of eleven, and we may as well quantify this, the three largest predominantly-male departments will grant leave without pay or accept resignations. This policy may be termed "malleable" and/or subject to change without notice, since it will depend to a large extent on personal considerations when the chips are down. Since no rule spells it out, a lot of leeway is provided in such decisions. Others state (this is the consensus): that if it is a "good" employee who plans to return to work, they will grant all leave of any kind which the person has to her credit, and grant further leave-

without-pay until she is able to return. (They know not what they do, obviously.)

This is subject to review and modification at the hands of a Personnel Committee so it may be only a pious hope or an expression of good intentions that are likely to be vetoed by a less sympathetic or more objective super-authority. One bleeding heart stated that "we need more humanity in administration of rules surrounding this extremely sensitive aspect" of employer-employee relations but did not further elucidate. For myself, I say that the less obligation assumed (see Points One through Seven) the less liability will return to haunt you.

6. Does the classification system pose problems with respect to temporary reassignment of duties? There is no provision in our classification and compensation plan to effect any legitimate down grading of job duties in consideration of the lady employee's interesting condition. In spite of the fact that she is, as the Spanish so appropriately say, "embarazada," her natural limitations should not be permitted to become an embarrassment to her employer in the performance of her duties.

The employers' rights (and obligations to the taxpayer) peculiarly enough appear to me to be paramount in all aspects of this situation. If a legitimate job happens to be available and the employee will accept the lesser pay for lesser duties that may be more convenient for her, temporarily, and if the employer is NOT INCONVENIENCED IN ANY WAY, and she actually is capable of rendering acceptable service, without excessive assistance from three other people, then the employer might give the possibility some consideration. The occurrence of a blessed event should be sufficiently commonplace by now (see PPR, April 1953, page 78) that the turning of such cartwheels should be unnecessary on the part of anybody in the organization.

7. Do employees have any insurance coverage? Group hospitalization policies usually, with admirable foresight, provide a method for handling the contingency we are treating from our limited experience in this limited space. If the pregnancy occurs after a suitable lapse of time, for instance ten months after the employee has become a member, the membership cannot be considered as something rushed into merely because of the benefits bestowed, but as something eventuating willy-nilly in the history of human frailty. (Needless to say I am not quoting verbatim from any typical hospitalization policy.) Payment of premiums would be continued on an individual basis if the employee wished to continue her

membership, by taking advantage of conventional conversion privileges; usually provided.

To sum up, there are advantages implicit in retaining a "good" employee in the service, but there is no built-in obligation to a female employee to grant super-consideration because of a pregnancy, either planned or the usual kind, which she may undertake to go through with while working as long as possible. (Naturally, she needs the money; who doesn't?) The fairest way to handle the situation is to provide a rule which has some leeway. (Which opens the door to abuses: is she really a good employee; really *that* good?) She will be less capable in some kinds of jobs; she's an outright physical liability in certain respects, and becomes progressively more so in any kind of work. Does her future usefulness outweigh the present temporary difficulties? How much future usefulness may one actually expect? Do I honestly owe her consideration above-and-beyond-the-call-of-duty because of superior past service? Since sick leave may in some instances be accrued to distinctly frightening proportions, budgetwise, should pregnancy be classified as are other severely disabling illnesses and be so treated? I say no. I say one is under no obligation to reward faithful past performance by granting super-sick-leave which in addition, as a practical certainty, eventually separates the employee from the service if she is to take care of her family "properly." Better err on the side of rigidity: "seventh month, three month," rule. Permit payment for or liquidation of any accrued annual leave, no more; require resignation, but allow reemployment rights on an as-if-and-when basis. In the long run everybody benefits, most particularly the child by having its mother home—and the person who replaces the former employee—who has a new job. This is not sentimentalism—it is enlightened self-interest for the employer.

ELIZABETH BERTRAM, Personnel Manager, National Film Board of Canada.

A sound policy on maternity leave can scarcely be formulated in a vacuum. The initiators of such a policy, whether or not they share the social attitudes prevalent in the society in which they live, can hardly avoid considering these social attitudes and the way in which they are reflected in policies on certain larger issues such as the right of women to free choice of employment and the right of married women to employment in the public service. Policies and opinions on these larger issues are bound to condition the formulation of an attitude or policy on a specific matter like mater-



nity leave. Where, for example, there is no restriction on the employment of married women, it is eminently logical and politically possible to proceed with a careful examination of the problem, to formulate a positive policy and to draft suitable regulations. Where, on the other hand, social attitudes and consequently government policies inhibit or restrict the employment of women, and particularly married women, then the matter of maternity leave is likely to be given scant consideration. In this case the result may be a purely negative policy or one affording very limited benefits.

Though the foregoing may sound like a statement of the obvious, it is perhaps a necessary prelude to the assumptions which will follow.

For purposes of this discussion it will be assumed that conditions, i.e. social attitudes and policies on the larger issues, are favourable to the formulation of a positive policy on maternity leave and that what remains to be done is to draft suitable regulations to cover it.

Perhaps the most perplexing question to be answered before regulations can be set down is "How should this type of leave be classed?" Should it be classed as a form of sick leave or should it be a completely separate category of leave? There is precedent for both points of view. The federal civil service in the United States carefully eschews the term maternity leave but, in its Annual and Sick Leave Regulations, October 1953 (Part 30, Title 5, Code of Federal Regulations), it is stated that "sick leave shall be granted to employees when they are incapacitated for the performance of their duties by sickness, injury, or *pregnancy and confinement* or for medical, dental or optical examination or treatment. . . ." The British Civil Service goes a step further by spelling out in some detail the regulations governing maternity leave, but they also retain it under the general heading "sick leave" and make it chargeable to the employee's normal sick leave entitlement. On the other hand, if one turns to the international civil service one finds that the United Nations in its "Staff Rules" of December 1, 1952, deals with maternity leave quite independently of sick leave (see Chapter VI, Rule 106.3) and clearly sets forth an employee's entitlement under this type of leave. Since space does not permit the quotation of the whole text of Rule 106.3, it is only possible to mention the salient points while at the same time warmly commending the full text to the attention of those seriously interested in the subject.

Briefly then, the United Nations Staff Rules provide that an employee, with two years con-

tinuous service at the anticipated date of confinement, is entitled, upon presentation of a medical certificate, to six weeks leave with pay prior to confinement together with a further six weeks following confinement. The first six weeks is not obligatory if the employee presents a medical certificate stating she is fit for duty but the second six weeks is obligatory. Employees with less than two years service receive partial pay or annual leave plus leave without pay depending upon the length of service. Return to duty following twelve weeks leave must be approved by the United Nations Medical Officer. It is also stipulated that sick leave *shall not normally* be granted for maternity cases except where serious complications arise.

In all three instances cited, the granting of maternity leave is subject to medical advice and control whether the leave is considered a form of sick leave or a separate category of leave. The distinction therefore is not a medical one but an administrative one involving the nature of the entitlement.

The divorcing of maternity leave from sick leave, provided it remains under medical control, has certain advantages both for the employee and for the employer. In the first place it allows the employee a separate, additional entitlement for a specific cause, pregnancy and confinement, which, it may be argued, is not an illness in the ordinary sense and for which the sick leave entitlement, usually the same for both men and women, may not be adequate. In the second place it permits the formulation of specific rules and benefits more suited to the particular circumstances than is likely to be the case if pregnancy and confinement remain just one of the reasons for granting sick leave.

Should there be compulsory periods of leave before or after confinement or both? Here opinions and practice vary considerably. The United Nations Rules provide a practical solution in respect of the pre-confinement period by granting a six weeks' entitlement but providing that such leave need not be taken if the employee is medically certified as fit for work. The compulsory six weeks following confinement reflects a very prevalent tendency to be arbitrary on one aspect of maternity leave even though it is quite possible for circumstances to vary considerably in individual cases. For example, should a woman who has had the misfortune to lose her baby be prevented by compulsory post-confinement leave from returning to work as soon as she is physically fit? Perhaps it would be wiser for the administrators to drop the compulsory feature from post-confinement absence and to leave the time of

return to work to the discretion of the medical advisor in each case. This is, in fact, the practice in the British Civil Service. Such a practice would not, of course, prevent the administrators from limiting the entitlement of paid leave both before and after confinement, though a fairer arrangement might be to set a total limit rather than one divided into two arbitrary parts.

These and a number of other points would have to be considered and weighed by the administrators in relation to the particular set of circumstances existing in their area. Within the space limit it has only been possible to select two major points for discussion but it is to be hoped that what has been omitted here may be covered by other contributors to this column.

**DR. NORRIS R. JONES**, Medical Officer, California State Personnel Board.

The present hospitalization stay of the mother after normal childbirth ranges from three to five days. The mother, under such circumstances, is usually able to provide for her own and the baby's care two weeks following delivery.

In California state service, these mothers return to work from six weeks to three months after childbirth unless complications, family responsibilities, or personal desires make a longer interval appropriate. The State Personnel Board included childbirth as an authorized reason for use of sick leave on December 15, 1947. When a bonafide reinstatement or return from a leave of absence is demonstrated by one month's employment, the employee is entitled to her maternity sick leave benefits upon certification by the physician. At the present time, we have no method of determining the percentage of women who resume State employment following childbirth.

In May of this year, two statements were added to our transactions manual to define the duration of unemployment permitted pregnant employees and to clarify the sick leave benefits for confinement. These read as follows:

As a matter of good health practice, it is suggested that an expectant mother should not continue her employment past the seventh calendar month of her pregnancy.

Ten days is the normal maximum allowable sick leave following childbirth.

Complications, at the time of delivery, may justify the authorization of more than ten days of sick leave. A normal maximum of ten days represents a fair dispensation for the uncomplicated delivery. Any greater allowances

should not be granted without complete documentation, including, but not limited to, the statement of the attending physician. This statement should include valid reasons for the extension such as toxemia, Caesarean section, hemorrhage, infection, placenta previa, or other complications. The review of such medical statements by lay people such as supervisors, personnel clerks, or personnel officers places them at a great disadvantage. Proper decision of extended sick leave benefits due to complications would be facilitated by the assistance of a qualified practitioner or a person who has been trained by experience to understand such conditions.

Vacation leave is earned by the employee as a right and is, therefore, part of his compensation. We believe that vacation leave should be used for prenatal visits as well as for income during the ten days post-partum period of disability. We do not authorize sick leave for indisposition of a minor character during the course of a normal pregnancy. We do, however, grant sick leave if complications such as bleeding, toxemia, or miscarriage occur. The presence of these complications may justify an extension of this arbitrary ten days' disability period.

When expectant mothers reach the 8th calendar month of their pregnancy in this jurisdiction, they may terminate their employment by resignation or leave of absence if the department concurs in the latter. Employees who resign have the privilege of reinstatement for a period of three years following the date of resignation. Employees who are granted a leave of absence have an absolute right to return to their positions. The heads of departments do not believe that leave of absence should be granted on all occasions. They feel the privilege of leave of absence should be extended primarily to employees upon the basis of their length of service, satisfactory performance, and value to the department. An unsatisfactory employee will usually not receive this consideration. An employee who resigns is able to withdraw her contribution from the retirement fund to help her meet hospital, medical, and living expenses. A leave of absence may be granted for a period of six weeks up to one year.

The six weeks to three months that normally elapse between the date of confinement and reinstatement or return from leave of absence are usually sufficient for the employee to have recuperated. Under such circumstances, the need for a temporary reassignment of duties should be very infrequent.

Our employees, who carry hospitalization

and medical insurance, are covered by two companies, the California-Western States Life Insurance Company and the California Physicians Service. The former provides extended coverage without further premiums to embrace the delivery and hospitalization, as long as conception pre-dated the date of resignation or leave of absence. If the employee has a California Physicians Service policy, she must make individual premiums direct, at a higher rate following resignation to keep her insurance in force. However, if she takes a leave of absence, this action places her in the intermittent group of the California Physicians Service policyholders and she makes individual payments direct at the same rate as when she was employed.

**JAMES E. MOUNTAIN**, Director, Municipal Civil Service Board, Portland, Oregon.

The soundest policy is not to give maternity leave at all—or at least to take the profit out of it.

I can well imagine that anyone reading that statement will wonder—what's he mad about? The answer is simple—the whole idea of maternity leave, if tied up with the sick leave provisions, is a racket and should be examined for the harm that it does to the public service compared with the so-called good it does.

My experience has been in a jurisdiction which allows sick leave to be taken for maternity absences, and I'm directing my criticism at that practice.

From the very beginning, this "maternity leave" is a joke, because it goes under the guise of sick leave. Now sick leave was provided so that employees who are ill would stay home and not be a danger or menace to their fellow workers. Sick leave is not a pension for being sick; it is an inducement for employees to stay home and take care of themselves without having to feel that they cannot afford to miss a day's pay by laying off. It is a protection for all employees who are not sick.

But the sick leave provisions of all agencies have long been the target of "fringe benefit. . ." First, the amount of time an employee could accrue was increased. Then the idea that an employee should be paid for sick leave time he doesn't use was brought forward, thus defeating the intent of sick leave. Under that system, employees who are ill will come to work so they can accumulate their time and be paid for it when they resign. The effort is now being made to include maternity leave as "sick" leave.

In our agency it is possible by parlaying two

years' vacation and full sick leave accrual to get 22 weeks off with pay while on "maternity leave." Also, during the time an employee is off, no replacement can be hired because there is no provision for paying two people for one job. In addition to the time that is paid for, an employee can get a non-pay leave of absence for any length of time. When she comes back to work she has to bump somebody down or out, and if she doesn't come back (and a majority don't), the substitute who filled in on a temporary basis has been deprived of some of his or her seniority time. It's a truly vicious business which causes much hard feeling among other employees. The male members of the service have the feeling that "maternity leave" is only a device to defray some of the expenses of the delivery, and if the government is going to subsidize the birth rate in its female employees, it can also afford to help defray the same expenses when incurred by the male employees' wives. The female employees who are not taking advantage of the liberal provisions of "maternity leave" are convinced that every conception by their sister employees was accomplished for the express purpose of getting an extended paid vacation.

The only employees who are happy are the relatively few who are able to take advantage of it. While the fact that they are few may mitigate against wholesale cessation of the practice of granting such leave, it also points up that as a fringe benefit it is strictly limited. One of the basic tenets of the idea of fringe benefits is that they are applicable to all in equal measure; maternity leave certainly doesn't qualify under that definition. How, then, can maternity leave be granted and not create more problems and crises than it solves? It is my feeling that if the following conditions were met, maternity leave would cease to be an administrators' problem.

1. Call it by its right name—and divorce it completely from sick leave provisions.
2. Take the money out of it. Do not pay for maternity leave, but allow it like a regular non-pay leave of absence.
3. Provide that the employee who takes the leave will not "bump" any replacement. (She has no right to return to her old position—has right only to the first vacancy that arises after the expiration of the leave.)
4. Provide that no civil service status or seniority accrues during the time employee is on leave.

Many who have bothered to read this far will immediately sit down to write that they know of a deserving case where the use of sick leave for maternity reasons was the salvation

of mother and child. But I want to ask one question in return: for every deserving case, how many cases can you think of where maternity leave was a means of helping pay for the maternity expenses? That's why I think the soundest policy is to take the money out of it. It is a matter of justice and equity; either give it to all (as an equivalent in time or money) or give it to none.

**ERNA W. ADLER**, Personnel Technician, New Rochelle, New York.

The administration of leave privileges, including maternity leave, in New Rochelle, is under the control of the various department heads with the approval of the City Manager. Despite the existence of ordinances setting forth annual and sick leave policies, practices are not standard, and administration is not uniform. The civil service agency has little responsibility for supervision of leave practices, including annual, sick, maternity, education, and travel leave. The municipal departments do report absences from work for various reasons to the civil service agency, but the agency has no records covering sick leave balances or vacation schedules and becomes aware that maternity leave has been given only in those cases where a substitute is requested.

Civil service practice in New Rochelle considers pregnancy, in general, a controlled condition and not a sickness. Any maternity leave that may be granted is not a compensable leave, whereas sick leave with pay is provided to take the employee through unforeseen illness. Pregnancy is reportable, under New Rochelle civil service rules, not later than the fourth month, although the employee may continue to work as long as she wishes. Vacation leave is defined as a "beneficient surcease from regular duty for a specified period each year; a period of freedom, rest or diversion for the employee and a gain to the employer through a recuperated and better satisfied employee." An employee, however, may reduce maternity leave by any or all earned credits.

It is not good practice to anticipate either vacation or sick leave, although we have had cases where sick leave has been granted for an "anticipated nervous breakdown" and such leave has been added to vacation leave. Lack of uniformity in leave administration produces unfairness, in that some employees are enabled to take extended vacations with pay, while others abide by the rules and take leave without pay for their occasional extended absence from duty.

Our agency's experience with regard to

mothers actually returning to work indicates that those employees who have well-paying municipal posts tend to return. Those employees who have been employed by the local government for a comparatively brief period of time usually do not return. Prescribed periods of absence both before and after childbirth are good administrative practice and make for uniform standards.

The City of New Rochelle has not sought assistance from the medical profession in establishing rules, but it has been sought by employees who have desired exceptions to the rules.

Good civil service practice calls for granting an extended leave of absence for pregnancy, but the demands of municipal administration make it seem practical that the employee should resign with reemployment rights. General practice is to grant maternity leaves from three months to one year. In our jurisdiction, and under civil service law (New York State), the employee must return to her duties and work at least one payroll period or she is deemed to have resigned her position.

The classification system of the public service does not pose any problems with respect to temporary reassignment of duties within the department during advanced stages of pregnancy. If an employee is performing related duties, she is still working within her classification.

Resignation terminates coverage in a group plan under such types of insurance as Blue Cross and Blue Shield, but the employee may continue the contract as an individual and pay directly to the nearest insurance office.

Good personnel practice in the granting of maternity leave, in general, is a difficult thing to decide, because in some instances the employee on leave maintains touch with her department and is up-to-date on its work and problems. In other cases, the employee is gone for an extended period of time and returns to her post with divided interests. It is an adage that no one can serve two masters equally well, but civil service rights leave this decision up to the employee.

**THOMAS J. MURPHY**, Secretary, City Service Commission, Baltimore, Maryland.

The subject of maternity leave is a relatively new one to personnel administration. The literature on this topic is so sparse as to make the researcher wonder whether until recently it was considered impolite to discuss the matter in refined personnel circles.

Polite or not, the problem looms large on

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the personnel horizon. The time has passed for debate as to whether married women should be employed at regular jobs. Whatever arguments against the idea may have been advanced in the 1920's and 1930's, World War II and subsequent developments have, for all practical intents and purposes, effectively established the fact that married women are here to stay—in government, industry, and commerce.

Here to stay, also, is motherhood. No responsible personnel executive would want to be recorded as opposed either to marriage or to the normal fulfillment thereof, but at the same time many personnel men and women are puzzled as to how to harmonize blessed events with the preparation of departmental budgets or the typing of annual reports. Many office chores can be predicted with a reasonable degree of accuracy: budgets must be submitted by January 1 or the annual report must be sent to the printer by March 1. Assuming Mrs. Smythe is responsible in large part for meeting these deadlines, what happens when Sir Stork has an appointment with her approximately on February 1?

Not many years ago married women were expected to resign at the first whisper that coming events were casting shadows. More recently, it seems in some cases, a game has developed in which prospective mothers compete with one another to see which can stay on the job the closest to Stork Day. An even more recent development, at least in the public service, is the request for maternity leave, which is usually meant to be without pay. This in itself does not pose any great personnel problem since discretion usually rests with the department head. On the other hand, some employee organizations have lately begun to insist that maternity leave be charged to accumulated sick leave reserves, which in many cases would mean full pay for most of the period. Others have asserted that absences due to pregnancy should be charged to annual or personal leave accounts. (It may be debatable whether pregnancy is sickness in the usual sense of the word, but there is no question that it is definitely quite personal.)

Looked at in a broad light, there appears

to be the same justification for granting maternity leave as military leave. In the one case, the continuance of the nation is at stake; in the other, its preservation. The main issue in both instances is the assurance to the employee of return to the job upon completion of duty. Critics may claim that the male is forced to enter military service whereas the female has freedom of choice in the matter of matrimony and motherhood and that this justifies different treatment on the part of the employer. This argument is not completely true and, in the opinion of the writer, should be rejected as not in the public interest.

At the present stage of development maternity leave should probably not be considered a right which the employee can exercise unilaterally, but rather as a privilege which may be extended by the department head who may take into consideration the record and value of the employee, and the effect of each such leave on the work of the department. Should maternity leave become an absolute right it could have an adverse effect on the employment of women—both single and married—in organizations unable to spare the service of any considerable number of its employees for protracted periods.

A reasonable maternity leave plan, it would seem, is a definite must in any modern personnel program. The lack of a plan could result in situations like the following actual case.

A municipal employee, aged 42, with 25 years' service asked for maternity leave to have her first child. Leave was denied. The employee then applied for retirement on the basis of 25 years' service. Denied retirement because of insufficient age, the employee devoted her efforts to having the retirement law amended to permit retirement after 25 years regardless of age. Before the situation got entirely out of hand the personnel administrator was able to persuade the department head to grant the leave. The lady was happy, she had a beautiful baby boy, and later returned to her job, making the department head happy. The personnel man was happy, too, because it wasn't necessary to hold an examination to fill the lady's position.



the

## bookshelf

**The Meaning of Work and Retirement.** Eugene A. Friedmann and Robert J. Havighurst. The University of Chicago Press, 1954. 197 pp. \$3.75.

This work reports the findings of a series of studies of the attitudes toward the meanings of work and retirement of older persons from five different occupations. Steelworkers, coal miners, retail sales persons, skilled craftsmen, and physicians were the groups whose views were studied.

The studies were made by five different individuals over a period of two years and supervised by the University of Chicago Committee for the Study of Later Maturity, of which one of the authors, Professor Robert J. Havighurst, was a member. Dr. Havighurst is Professor of Education and Chairman of the Committee on Human Development at the University. The other author, Dr. Friedmann, now a Professor of Sociology with the University of Wisconsin Extension Service, collaborated in making the initial study based upon the meanings of work and retirement for a group of skilled craftsmen. He also conducted the study of steelworkers and assisted in studies of the other groups.

No claim is made that the groups are representative of all the workers of their age in their respective occupations, but they appear to be either representative or a fair sample of their immediate group. All of the studies had a common interest in the meanings of work and the relations of these meanings to problems of retirement, but the concepts and procedures were modified as the studies progressed. These modifications made it possible to make valuable improvements as the studies progressed, but limits the comparisons that may be made. The age of the coal miner group began with 50 years, while the physicians were 65 or above. Some of the interviewees were employed; some had retired voluntarily, others were retired by a compulsory age retirement policy, while still others were retired for

health or disability. Some of those retired had adequate incomes, others did not.

While these dissimilarities limited comparisons, a number of similarities among the groups were found. The meaning of association appeared with nearly the same relative frequency in widely diverse occupations, the response to this factor being as follows: Steelworkers, 15%; coal miners, 19%; skilled craftsmen (over 65) 20%; sales people, 20% and physicians, 19%.

After the initial investigation of steelworkers, the following hypotheses were developed for the study:

1. Work has recognized meanings in addition to that of earning a living.
2. Those persons who regard work as primarily a way of earning a living will prefer to retire at age 65 (or normal retirement age).
3. Those persons who stress values of work other than that of earning a living will prefer to continue working past age 65.
4. The extra-economic meanings of work are stressed to a greater extent by members of the higher skilled occupational groups.

While it is customary in certain social investigations to begin with such hypotheses, this reviewer is not convinced that the approach is the soundest one in testing attitudes. However, it must be said that the social scientists conducting the study were not able to confirm these hypotheses in a number of instances, which supports the procedure and undermines the reviewer's convictions on the subject.

Interviewer procedures and subject matter varied considerably, but with a few exceptions, the responses of the interviewees to the following meanings of work were obtained:

1. No meaning other than money
2. Routine
3. Self-respect
3. Prestige, respect of others
4. Association

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5. Purposeful activity, self-expression, new experience
5. Service to others

In comparing the responses to these factors, the following things were found:

1. A larger percentage of the workers of lower skill and socioeconomic status than those of higher status see their work as having no other meaning than that of earning money.
2. The five occupational groups all value "association" about equally as a meaning of work.
3. Work as a routine which makes the time pass is recognized about equally by all five groups.
4. All groups discover self-respect and secure respect or recognition from others by means of their work, and there is probably no reliable difference among them in the prevalence of this meaning.
5. The physicians show a high awareness of the "service to others" meaning in their work. This may be characteristic of the "service" professions.
6. Work is important as a source of interesting, purposeful activity and as a source of intrinsic enjoyment for all five groups, but there may be reliable differences between them in this respect.

While the book is a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the subject on retirement and the meanings of work, it may have even greater value in pointing the way to further research, not only on work and retirement, but on human motivation in general.

The study as a whole supports the conclusions, if such support is needed, that retirement may be tragic without adequate income, proper preparation and the substitution of leisure activities for the extra economic meanings and values which work has supplied to people. The authors appropriately began this book with the quotation: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground." (Gen. 3:19). They could have even more appropriately closed it with: "Man does not live by bread only." (Deut. 8:3).—ANGUS LAIRD, *Director, Florida Merit System.*

**Factors Influencing Organizational Effectiveness.** A. L. Comrey; J. M. Piffner; and W. S. High. University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California, 1954. 60 pp. \$1.35.

This is the final report of a four-year study of organizational effectiveness. Personnel people will be especially interested in the material in Chapter IV which consists of prose descrip-

tions of "good organizational behavior" measured in three ways: (1) through questions which supervisory personnel answered about their own feelings and behavior; (2) questions asked of employees at lower supervisory and non-supervisory levels; and (3) through questions asked of a supervisor's subordinates.

For example, in the category Supervisory Self-Evaluation, the study reported that the dimensions "adequate authority" and "non-hypercritical attitude toward subordinates" can be rated as having a strong probability of validity. Supervisors in the more effective subunits feel that their superiors do not make decisions which they should make themselves. They are not conscious of irritations occasioned by the necessity of getting approval from above. They feel that they have enough authority to handle emergency decisions themselves. The better supervisors say that they practice general rather than close supervision; they say that their employees do good work; they would replace few of their subordinates; they believe that their people put forth adequate effort; and their subordinates seem to them to be competent.

**Civil Service and Libraries.** John Boynton Kaiser. Reprint from the July, 1954, issue of *Library Trends*, a publication of the University of Illinois Library School.

Mr. Boynton discusses the advantages and disadvantages of obtaining and managing library personnel under civil service provisions. The reprint is recommended reading for civil service authorities as well as librarians since most of the disadvantages seem to stem from misunderstanding and lack of cooperation.

**Public Administration Organizations: A Directory, 1954.** Frank B. Cliffe, editor. Public Administration Clearing House, 1313 East 60th, Chicago 37, Illinois, 1954. 150 pp. \$2.50.

This is the seventh edition of a directory of voluntary organizations working in the general field of public administration or in fields that impinge upon or affect public administration. The directory lists and describes 513 organizations—234 professional and technical societies; 179 organizations for officials and administrators; 100 citizen organizations.

**The Appeals of Communism.** Gabriel A. Almond. Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1954. 415 pp. \$6.00.

Why do people join the Communist Party? What happens after they have joined? Why do

some of them leave? This book provides many answers to these questions and gives convincing insight into the motivations, tensions, and loyalties of Party members.

Information was gathered by (1) extensive interviewing of former American, British, French, and Italian Communists; (b) a study of Communist communication—mass media as well as formal doctrine; (c) biographical data of present members of the Party; (d) some clinical case histories furnished by a group of American psychoanalysts who had had Communists as patients.

*The Appeals of Communism* fully demonstrates that no single stereotype fits the Communist Party; there are many different types of members and movements. The findings on this point and their implications for domestic and foreign policy are best illustrated by quoting from the final chapter.

A policy which fails to take these peculiarities and differences into account, which approaches all Communist movements and all Communists as though they were identical, is bound to make serious mistakes.

Thus it is clear that the British and American Communist parties stand in the sharpest contrast to those of France and Italy. The British and American parties are "deviational." They may be understood in part as movements into which some of the disruptive tendencies of the larger society drain off. They do not touch the real fiber of the British and American societies. . . . The Communist parties of France and Italy, on the other hand, fulfill political needs, needs for protest against an inequitable distribution of values and stalemated societies which offer no promise of future improvement, needs which are not embraced by any other power and militant political movement.

.....  
The "People's Liberation" movements of the

underdeveloped areas represent a third type of Communist Party which is even more threatening than the continental European variety. . . . Here, class, nation, and ethnic protest meet in a situation which is peculiarly susceptible to violence and to civil war.

Gabriel A. Almond is Professor of International Relations and Research Associate of the Center of International Studies, which is affiliated with the Woodrow Wilson School of Princeton University. This four-year study was made possible by a grant of the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

**Labor Mobility and Economic Opportunity.** Related Essays by E. Wight Bakke; Philip M. Hauser; Gladys L. Palmer; Charles A. Myers; Dale Yoder; and Clark Kerr. John Wiley & Sons, 440 Fourth Avenue, New York 16, N. Y., 1954. 118 pp. \$3.50.

This volume is a cooperative venture to make generally available the results of intensive research and thought over many years at half a dozen leading university research centers. It is not just a book of economic theory. "The problem with which these authors are concerned is central to our survival as a nation dedicated to the principle that that group is economically and socially strongest, most secure, and most able to contribute to civilized life, which *elicits* the energies of *all* its people, not just a chosen few. Free choice by the worker as to the area of production or services to which he will devote his energies and free choice by the employer as to whom he will employ are essential principles upon which the past performance of this nation of people is based."

## 1954 CSA Abstractors

The following persons have accepted the editors' invitation to serve as abstractors of articles for the "Personnel Literature" section of *Public Personnel Review* during 1954.

- Mrs. Erna W. Adler, Personnel Technician, Municipal Civil Service Commission, New Rochelle, New York
- Richard Byler, Administrative Assistant, City of Kenosha, Kenosha, Wisconsin
- Earl R. Chambers, Personnel Director, Civil Service Commission, St. Louis County, Missouri
- W. Brooke Graves, Legislative Reference Service, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.
- Carl G. Johnson, Personnel Director, Oakland County Board of Auditors, Pontiac, Michigan
- Daniel M. Kirkhuff, Personnel Division, Kansas Department of Administration, Topeka, Kansas
- Mrs. Fay Katch, Personnel Director, Chicago Housing Authority, Chicago, Illinois
- Barbara J. Kingsley, Personnel Examiner, Municipal Civil Service Board, Portland, Oregon
- Grace M. Pierson, Louis J. Kroeger and Associates, Los Angeles, California
- John W. Proctor, Personnel Director, Civil Service Commission, Flint, Michigan
- R. L. W. Ritchie, Chief Personnel Officer, British Columbia Civil Service Commission, Victoria, B.C., Canada
- Mrs. Helen Thompson, Assistant Director of Personnel, City of Atlanta, Georgia
- Horace Turner, Personnel Technician, Civil Service Commission, Cincinnati, Ohio
- William J. Veeder, Personnel Director, City of Fort Lauderdale, Florida
- Tom Womble, Assistant Personnel Director, Miami Beach, Florida

## Administration

McCaffrey, John L., "Wanted: More Generalists." *Personnel Journal*, July-August, 1954.—The greatest task of the president of a modern company is to understand enough of all the special activities of his organization, so that he can assign the right team of experts to work on problems as they arise. Because business has demanded specialists in all fields, colleges and universities have produced them. The president can find men to run a department where one line of work is followed, but he loses sleep over the problem of finding executives with sufficient knowledge and background to run a whole group of things. Plus factors in specialization, as applied to management men, include expert knowledge of an area, less need for training, and a larger income at a younger age because of earlier usefulness. Disadvantages to the specialist are limited knowledge, interests, experience and viewpoint, with the tendency to judge business factors by the sole standard of his specialty. This narrowness of view is a roadblock to advancement from the standpoint of top-management consideration. The president has an increasing number of specialists and fewer general executives with which to build his top organization. Often the specialist himself reaches a point where he realizes, or is told, that he can go no higher. He can either move to another organization, wait until pension age, or try to broaden himself. Morale suffers when the specialist produces a solution to a problem, entirely satisfactory from the standpoint of good practice in his specialty, but which management turns down. The specialist operates in an area of "middle management," where decisions are neither made nor carried out, and his attitude often reflects this frustration. Business needs men with a rounded education, with emphasis on the liberal arts, but top management must adapt its hiring policies to its promotion policies. Coaching on the job by selecting promising young men and moving

them around through different functions of the business is one approach. The most promising approach is to train young men with records of accomplishment, in order to produce a type of business executive who can deal with spiritual and moral as well as economic and technical problems; who knows how to get along with and direct the efforts of others; and who understands the society in which he operates so that he can follow its changes intelligently to make sure that his business serves its most useful purpose.—*Erna W. Adler.*

**Webb, Leicester,** "Academic Freedom and the Civil Service." *Public Administration*, 13 (1) New Series, March, 1954.—This article in the *Journal of the Australian Regional Groups of the Institute of Public Administration* well illustrates the universality of some problems in the field of public administration. "The issue is whether the rule that civil servants must not publicly discuss matters which fall within the ambit of Government policy should be relaxed to enable them to take part in the proceedings of learned societies and to contribute generally to the advancement of the social sciences." Three specific illustrations are presented: one involving a Treasury officer in New Zealand, two involving Australian officials, all of whom engendered critical comment in the press. One of the Australians, connected with the National Resources Board, discussed Australian social services, while the other, Director of the Bureau of Agricultural Economy, discussed the marketing of Australian wheat.

Both the need for and the difficulties of cross-fertilization of academic and civil-service thinking in the social sciences are recognized. If there is not "a commerce in ideas between civil service social scientists and academic social scientists, the civil service social scientists will lose contact with the disciplines in which they were trained and become mere day-to-day improvisors, while the academic social scientists will lose that sense of the relevance of their work without which they inevitably lose their sense of direction." There are trained social scientists in government service and there will be more. The difficulty involved in thus raising the standards of the bureaucracy were foreseen long ago by John Stuart Mill. "The increasingly technical nature of governmental work and the civil servant's near monopoly of data relevant to policy issues in the economic field" brings us to the point at which the maintenance of what Mill called "watchful criticism of equal ability outside the body" becomes a serious problem.

Participation by civil servants in discussions

of public questions at universities or on the platforms of learned societies is dangerous. The questions which have to be decided are whether the risk is worth running, and if so, on what conditions a civil servant should be conceded something approaching academic freedom. The answer to the first question is, for reasons above indicated, given in the affirmative. Four guiding principles are suggested in answer to the second question; if they be thought vague, one can only reply that the principles governing the political rights of civil servants are equally vague, but that nevertheless they work because, by and large, civil servants do put a premium on common sense and integrity. The four principles are: (1) an official in contributing to an academic discussion should be sure in his own mind that he is doing so only for the purpose of advancing a particular branch of knowledge and not in order to pursue by other means an argument he may be having with his official superior; (2) an official should avoid public comment, however academic the context may be, on issues which he knows to be under immediate consideration by government; (3) he should use only those facts which are available to any bona fide research worker; (4) an official speaking or writing as an academician should be moderate and detached.—*W. Brooke Graves.*

**McKeand, Charles A.,** "How to 'Sell' Your Personnel Program." *Personnel Journal*, June, 1954.—It is not uncommon to hear personnel men decry their inability to sell their personnel methods to the "boss." Nor is it uncommon for the "boss" to consider the personnel department the frill where the budget can best be cut in a pinch. Too often personnel men become "paper-work and procedures fuss-budgets" and lose sight of the fact that their sole purpose in being is to assist management in the job of "directing the activities of people at the places where they work, in making or selling an article, or rendering a service 'at a profit.'" Production analyzes new techniques and developments in terms of the profit to be realized. Personnel people have the benefits of research and new techniques but tend to "get into a dead-end of procedures, forms, charts, diagrams, and rationalizations." Seldom are their procedures evaluated in terms of the profit to the organization. The personnel methods that add to profit are those that create the kinds of attitudes that stimulate activities in selling or making a product or in performing a service. The creation of attitudes that will reduce turnover by 25% can go far to finance



the cost of a personnel department. Accident prevention programs have many times demonstrated reductions in costs far in excess of personnel budgets. By working with supervision, 95% of costly grievances can be handled at their points of origin. It is estimated that for every percent of absenteeism there is 2½% loss in production—a fertile field for the personnel man to effect a savings that will help justify his existence. These are only a few of the measurable elements of a personnel program through which the personnel man, who refuses to be interred in a grave of paper work, can create attitudes that will cut costs and increase profits to the tune of paying his way times over and selling the "boss."—*John W. Proctor.*

### Career Service

Peterson, Val, "The Public's Split Personality." *Personnel Administration*, May, 1954.—Regrettably, the former Governor of Nebraska was unable to recommend state employment to young people during his term of office because of insecurity of tenure and substandard salaries. The only compensation for the elected official is a sense of accomplishment; the career servants, however, have a right to expect a retirement system, reasonable and adequate compensation, and security in office, provided they do their jobs satisfactorily. It is impossible to try to be a good career civil servant and a politician at the same time. The "split personality" of the public is revealed by people's desire for service from the government—which means well-trained, well-paid qualified people—for the things they are interested in. On the other hand, in matters which do not interest them, or in public service in general, they look on public servants as nuisances and an unnecessary expense, reverting to the old idea that "that government is best which is smallest and governs least." Again, the best way to attract attention in public life is to be critical and to attack the public service, which creates a feeling of insecurity on the part of public employees, and tends to drive good people out of government service. The best way to correct this attitude is to render first-class service, to reflect the highest integrity and greatest interest in one's work, and to accept the business attitude that the customer is always right. The suggestion is made for a system of exchanging employees at the federal level with those in state, city and county agencies, and carrying the idea further, it might be advantageous to have some exchange with people in private industry. The implementation of such a plan is,

of course, another problem. Government is the biggest single thing in America, measured in terms of people, dollars, and influence, and the world trend is towards more government. Serving the public is therefore an honorable profession which, in the final analysis, may be more important in shaping the affairs of America and of the world than those who come and go in the political sphere of government.—*R. L. W. Ritchie.*

### Employee Relations

Likert, Rensis, and Seashore, Stanley E., "Improvement of Employee Attitudes and Output." *Monthly Labor Review*, June, 1954.—The importance of effective management of manpower stems directly from the facts that behavior is motivated and behavior is modifiable. The actual output of productive effort is dependent upon the psychological factors which lead each individual to produce within the limits of his ability. During World War II, millions of people changed to new occupations completely unlike those to which they had become accustomed. Marginal people were successfully taught necessary skills. Many jobs were found to be essentially simple tasks which could be taught in a matter of weeks or months, often with an improvement over prior standards of output and quality. Individuals are much more productive under some conditions than others, even though there are no discernible reasons for the difference other than those concerning human factors of motivation. High pay does not in itself produce satisfaction with the organization as a place to work or with the amount of pay itself. The installation of a piecework or other form of incentive-pay plan is often resisted or even totally rejected by the employees who stand to gain financially from them. Employee satisfaction with the plan and performance under it appear to be closely related to the supervisor's own acceptance of the plan, his willingness to discuss it often and openly, and the confidence he generates by the manner in which he handles complaints regarding the operation of the plan. Research results repeatedly indicate the importance of those motivating factors which lie in the more immediate work situation—the job itself, the supervision received, and the human relations existing among the work group on the job—rather than in the direct influence of the broad policies and practices (i.e. retirement and welfare benefits) of the larger organization. Differences in productivity and morale are directly related to differences in supervisory practices. Supervision is

more effective in motivating productivity if it is sufficiently general to give supervisors and workers the latitude they require to do their work intelligently. The effective supervisor is one who tends to see his job primarily in terms of human problems, of building a team to do the work required rather than in terms of rules, procedures, technical efficiency and direct pressure for productivity. Clerical and professional people share the opinion that group discussions and participation in making decisions have a positive effect on productivity and morale. An experiment in a sewing factory shows that high production is accompanied by increased employee satisfaction. Supervisors of low-production sections complain of insufficient delegation of authority and autonomy, and of inadequate communications from people higher in the organization. Employees tend to have a high degree of satisfaction with the job itself if the skill demands are high, if the job permits a variety of unlike activities, and if the job (or the way it is supervised) permits the employee to feel that he can make some decisions about how the work is to be done. Employee-oriented supervision, group participation, work-group solidarity, and opportunity for self-expression affect regular attendance as well as productivity and satisfaction. High motivation at work will be obtained through improvement of the immediate job situation of each employee, rather than through the direct impact of broader, impersonal policies and programs.—*Barbara J. Kingsley.*

### Rating

**Bayroff, A. G., Haggerty, Helen R., and Rundquist, E. A.,** "Validity of Ratings as Related to Rating Techniques and Conditions." *Personnel Psychology*, Spring, 1954.—A rating is a recorded judgment by one individual regarding the behavior of another individual. They have wide-spread use as management and psychometric devices for three general purposes: (1) to provide a basis for personnel actions, (2) for criteria in validating personnel instruments and procedures, (3) to furnish diagnostic information for counseling. This last purpose was not considered in a study of rating validity made at the Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas in March, 1950. The 400 officer students used as subjects provided conditions considered basic to such a study: (1) opportunity of rater to observe and evaluate over a period of time, (2) high constant motivation on part of rater, (3) availability of stable criterion score, and (4) operating rather than experimental condi-

tions. These factors were the constants in the situation. The variables were different types of rating scales, different groups of raters, identified versus anonymous raters, different rating time schedules. At the end of the study each officer had received six different ratings from his fellow officers. Primary criterion of validity was the average of 20 anonymous rankings on value to the Army on each of the 40 officers in each class group, made by random selection of half the officers in the group. Auxiliary criteria were the scores on official Efficiency Reports and class standing in the college for each officer. General conclusions from statistical analysis of rating scores were: (1) Average of number of ratings is more valid than a single rating. Increasing the number of competent raters per ratee is more effective than use of different rating scales, selection of raters according to certain characteristics, modifying conditions under which ratings are made and comparison of identified with unidentified ratings. (2) Ratings by identified raters were as valid as anonymous ratings. The study rejected common belief that anonymous ratings are more reliable. Practical implication of this finding would be to eliminate the expense and complexity of obtaining and preserving anonymity of ratings. (3) When numbers of ratings are made at a single rating session, those rated first are more valid than those rated last. Presumably, raters should either be limited in number of persons they must assess or should rate only a limited number at one session. (4) No material difference in validity between "hard" and "easy" raters. It was indicated that the element of personal leniency is not the problem commonly believed but further study is needed on this factor. (5) Different rating methods—five variations of graphic scale and two variations of forced choice—had little effect on validity. (6) Raters who ranked in the first third of the student body in the Officer Classification score—class standing and mean criterion standing by associates—gave ratings of higher validity than raters who ranked in the last third on such measurements. This would indicate that characteristics of accurate raters can be distinguished. (7) There was no difference in the validity of graphic ratings made at the beginning of the study and those made after a lapse of time with interpolation of forced-choice rating. (8) Use of same raters resulted in greater agreement between two sets of ratings than did use of same techniques.—*Horace Turner.*

**Hollander, E. P.,** "Peer Nominations on Leadership as a Predictor of the Pass-Fail Cri-

terion in Naval Air Training." *Journal of Applied Psychology*, June, 1954.—Separate studies at Officer Candidate Schools of the Marine Corps, of the Signal Corps, and of the Air Force "have lent substantiation to the validity of peer nominations on leadership against various performance and operational criteria." That acceptable standards of reliability are met by the nominating technique also is a matter of record. Research on which this article is based was designed to attempt to measure the correlation of peer nominations on leadership during pre-flight school to performance or operational criteria—specifically, to success or failure through the whole of flight training. Questions posed were (1) whether "peer nominations on leadership during pre-flight correlate significantly with a pass-fail criterion for the entire flight training program" and (2) whether "if so, how well do these nominations predict this criterion compared to other variables from pre-flight training." A sample of 268 preselected Naval Aviation Cadets, grouped into nine "sections" was studied. At the end of three months sectionmates nominated for a hypothetical "student commander" the three *best* qualified and the three *least* qualified. A summation of nomination weights was taken for each cadet's leadership nomination score and this evaluation was one of the criteria on which study was based. Other criteria were ACE (College Level) Test scores, Officer-Like-Qualities score (OLQ), and final pre-flight average (F. AV.). Intercorrelations among these predictor variables were computed, charted, and findings discussed. Though final pre-flight average (F. AV.) predicted "the pass-fail criterion at the highest relative level and with the greatest weight," a close second as a "pass-fail" predictor was the leadership score based on sectionmates' nominations *before* flight training and *well over a year prior to the time a candidate might receive his wings*. Nonsignificant and of limited predictive value were the superiors' ratings on qualities related to leadership and the ACE Test scores. That peer nominations on leadership, at the pre-flight level, might hold unique utility in predicting the pass-fail flight criterion was concluded and tentatively held attributable to two categories of conjecture: first, that "peer nominations might subsume characteristics intrinsically related to success in flight training, and, second, that peer nominations might tap a facet of the individual which is also perceived and reacted to by those who evaluate performance in flight training." Suggestion is made that the "informed judgment" of group opinion be exploited further. (Ar-

ticle contains a table showing Intercorrelations, Validity-Coefficients, and Beta Weights for Predictor Variables and bibliographical references.)—*Helen Thompson.*

### Training

Speroff, B. J., "Rotational Role Playing Used to Develop Executives." *Personnel Journal*, June, 1954.—One of the more important executive training methods is job rotation by which selected people are shunted from department to department so that they may absorb as much general and specific job information as possible. Role playing is another training device which has proved effective in bringing about a better understanding of the activities and problems of others. Rotational role playing is modified job rotation combined with role playing permitting executive training without disturbing normal operations or requiring anyone to move from job to job. Key executives are selected to participate in the program which may be from one to five years in duration. Participants are expected to continue running their own departments while learning the operation and problems of other parts of the organization. For example the production manager might turn over to his subordinate some of his detailed duties. The production manager would then have time to study the work of the sales manager. In this role he would be given a sales problem, talk to sales personnel, and attend sales conferences. The sales manager at the same time would be learning the work of the production manager, and both would still be running their own departments. After the roles have been assumed for a week or two the production manager and sales manager meet in conference with both sales and production people where they critically evaluate their own performance. After self-appraisal, each criticizes the other with regard to his understanding of the problem, and finally the audience is invited to criticize and evaluate the role scene and performance of the players. As each role playing session is completed, new ones are set up until each participant has undertaken all the various roles.—*Tom D. Womble.*

Jennings, Eugene E., "The Dynamics of Forced Leadership Training." *Journal of Personnel Administration and Industrial Relations*, April, 1954—Studies made to identify traits of leadership have resulted in a lack of agreement concerning any single trait or group of characteristics setting off the leader from

the nonleader. One result of these studies has been the conclusion that the traits of the leader which seem to be necessary and effective in one instance may be quite different from those of another leader in a different setting. This suggests that leadership is a social phenomenon and that it is present where people exist in some kind of interactional setting. Leadership consists of such actions by group members which aid in setting group goals, moving the group toward its goals, improving the quality of the interaction among the members, building the cohesiveness of the group, or making resources available to the group. Forced leadership training is predicated on the idea that leadership is a social thing and can be best understood by studying the processes and functions involved in group situations. Maximum participation is attempted by creating a situation in the training session which will more or less "force" the conferees to assume participating roles. Trainees work together and construct a case study about a particular human relations problem but do not solve it. Instead, they are divided at random into small groups for discussion and group solution of the problem. Without designating a leader, one usually emerges in the small group and makes the report to the whole group. In a second similar session, the "leaders" of the first sessions form one group for discussion and again the others are divided into small groups. Repeating this procedure in several sessions forces the nonleaders to assume leadership roles in the later sessions. To compare this procedure with the conference training method, forty supervisors were divided into two groups equal in numbers and comparable in performance and trained in the two methods. Evaluation of the supervisors six months after training showed that in over-all performance, the supervisors given forced-leadership training had made greater improvement. Fourteen of the twenty trained by this method were found in the upper half of the ranking compared to only six of the conference method trained supervisors. Prior to training, each of the two groups had had ten supervisors in the upper and lower halves of the ranking.—*Grace M. Pierson.*

**Stolz, Robert K.,** "Getting Back to Fundamentals in Executive Development." *Personnel*, May, 1954.—Many companies are coming to realize that formalized executive development programs, with their tools, techniques and procedures, do not in themselves develop good executives. Four main limitations of

these programs are: they frequently make men overly preoccupied with chances for promotion; they concentrate all efforts on a small group of supposedly high-potential men; they emphasize the company's role in training men, not what the men can do to develop themselves; they lull management into thinking that everything is being done to develop these men while the actual development may not be taking place. Most executives won't be surprised to learn that the climate management creates and the way the business is run are the controlling forces in executive development. The factors which most influence man's growth are also the fundamentals of good management. Identifying the obstacles and restrictions—as well as the aids—to executive growth requires reappraisal of a company's management methods. Elements of the business environment influencing executive growth which must be reconsidered are: (1) placing responsibility and holding men accountable for results; (2) providing challenging jobs that require each man to stretch his abilities; (3) the character of manager-man relationships, particularly delegation of authority, setting high standards and letting men know where they stand; (4) awarding salary increases and promotions so as to stimulate additional efforts; (5) facing up to executive incompetency, rehabilitating or if necessary, replacing current executives who do not meet acceptable standards; (6) flexible use of management "tools" by top executives so as not to limit the judgment and initiative of lesser executives; (7) degree of understanding among executives down the line of company objectives, organization, and policies, and how one's own job fits in; (8) creation by top-management of an atmosphere of entrepreneurial risk-taking, confidence, and encouragement. As tools, all the more formal methods of management development are helpful, as long as their true purposes and limitations are understood. But if the company's management is not fundamentally sound, if the climate and atmosphere fail to release executive talent, the formal procedures and tools will have only marginal value.—*Earl R. Chambers.*

### Testing

**Flanagan, John C.,** "Job Element Aptitude Classification Tests." *Personnel Psychology*, Spring, 1954.—Recent studies into the nature of both aptitudes and job functions has resulted in an increasing emphasis on understanding as opposed to using strictly empirical information in the building of aptitude tests.

A sound approach to prediction of occupational success appears to be based on: (1) a practical set of job element aptitude tests, (2) an analysis of occupations in terms of their aptitude requirements, and (3) empirical verification of the ability of the job analyst to identify job elements correctly. The development of the battery of Aptitude Classification Tests being reported upon here is an initial effort to satisfy the first requirement. These tests are constructed for use in combination with other tests in the battery and with other sources of information rather than for individual interpretation. Thus far, 14 tests have been developed covering the following elements: inspection, coding, memory, precision, assembly, scales, coordination, judgment and comprehension, arithmetic, patterns, components, tables, mechanics, and expression. New tests are in preparation. Validity coefficients calculated from preliminary forms have ranged from .24 to .64 with a median value of .41. Reliability coefficients computed for eight fairly typical

occupational aptitude scores ranged from .84 to .93 with a median value of .88. It is suggested that two forms of some of the tests be used if a higher over-all reliability is desired. Intercorrelations of the present tests are relatively low. In the most recent testing, only seven of the 91 correlation coefficients were as high as .50 and the median was .29. Additional validation studies are planned to obtain further evidence regarding the predictive value of these tests. (Tables are included which give a description of Form A of the tests, the combinations of tests recommended for obtaining scores for each of 30 occupations, the intercorrelations of the tests, and the correlations of several of the tests with previously published tests.)—*Daniel M. Kirkhuff.*

# Thanks to Our Abstractors

THE EDITORS of Public Personnel Review would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have contributed to the Personnel Literature Section during our 1954 publishing year. Their contributions assist our readers in keeping abreast of the current literature in the public personnel field.

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